'WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH'

The Poetry Review

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The Rolls House Publishing Co
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ADVERTISING AGENTS
Aldridge Press Ltd
27 Chancery Lane
London W C 2

VOLUME XLVIII · NUMBER IV

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Next Issue:

LORD DUNSANY

SIR JOHN SQUIRE

JOHN SMITH

KENNETH HARE

More Poems and Prose
and £140 in Prizes

TO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS: IF YOU CAN BUY THE BOOKS THAT ARE PUBLISHED BY OUR ADVERTISERS YOU WILL BE GIVING HELP ALL ROUND

TO OUR WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

*

IN YOUR OWN INTEREST READ CAREFULLY –

1. **No manuscripts can be considered** which have not the name and address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. **A self-addressed stamped envelope** must always be enclosed or, if an overseas contributor, the Coupon-Response International. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
3. One side only of the paper must be used: typescript is preferred.
4. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
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6. Poems over thirty lines in length have a doubtful chance of acceptance.
7. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
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9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least three months have elapsed. Inquiries by telephone cannot be dealt with.
10. The receipt of a proof does not necessarily imply immediate publication.

THESE PAGES—AN OFFERING TO

Martin Armstrong

Man, afraid to be alive,
Shuts his soul in senses five . . .

Prelude: A GREAT ADVENTURE

Early in December, several weeks before Christmas, our readers will have a pleasant surprise. *The Poetry Review* dated January-March is to be published and circulated a month in advance. *The first week in December instead of January.*

This new arrangement has been made for the purpose of avoiding the abnormal circumstances, postal and so on, of the Christmas season. It will be adopted each year henceforward for the winter issue only, and does not interfere with the publication of the other three quarterly numbers: so that the number covering April-June will appear as hitherto – during the first week of April. Likewise the July-September and October-December numbers.

So remember, please: the next *Poetry Review,* dated January-March, 1958, will be published before Christmas.

*

'Courageous as always, Mr. John Graddon has undertaken a great adventure, the preparation of a Poetry Anthology for the use of examiners and young readers, which, after a tremendous year-long labour, will be published in late summer or early autumn.' These words were spoken by the President at the Annual Meeting in May last, reported on Page 238. And *The Poetry Society's Verse-Speaking Anthology, 1957* has now been published in accordance with his promise. Not only examiners and young readers should welcome it, but every member of the Society, because it signifies a landmark in our history – the first publication of its kind for many years. As John Graddon explains in his foreword, it is 'a working script, from which to learn poetry at all the odd moments the days allow.' Older readers will value it as highly as their juniors.

Miss Marjorie Ffrangcon-Davies, expert in verse-elocution, who gave a valuable address at our Annual Conference of Examiners and Teachers in January (since printed in *The Poetry Review*) has reviewed the Anthology on page 221 of this number.

*

Whatever may be our opinions and feelings about the new marvel called Television, we who are closely associated with Poetry and the Arts must acknowledge at least one benefit bestowed on us that otherwise we might never have experienced.

On an afternoon in August viewers were enabled to attend the long-famous Eisteddfod of Wales and the Crowning of the Bard. Ten thousand people, including Welsh exiles who had come from all over the world, were assembled

in a pavilion in Anglesey for the annual ceremony, which included the impressive entry of the Ancient Druids, a fanfare, a song to the harp, and the dancing of young girls who made offerings of corn and flowers when the great audience re-affirmed the noble purpose of the Eisteddfod – *Peace.*

The report of the adjudicators, the naming of the winning but hitherto unrevealed poet, and the call to him somewhere in the audience – this must have been intensely moving in its dignity and yet mounting excitement to those of our readers who witnessed the ceremony. Probably they shared a very natural thought: how worthily Wales is persisting in its world-wide recognition of Britain's greatest heritage, which is Poetry. If only The Poetry Society could have the advantageous position now held by the Arts Council, it would not be long before men and women of vision were enabled to share in a triumphal acclamation of the year's best poet and his work, or several best poets and their work, by all Britain in emulation of 'gallant little Wales.'

*

A little while ago Lord Dunsany urged us to get into communication with Lady Wentworth who, he declared, was the best living woman-writer of the sonnet. 'No English woman has surpassed Lady Wentworth – Christina Rossetti was an Italian.' The sequel was a generous one: a sheaf of sonnets reached us, accompanied by a letter: 'You are welcome to use any of these you think suitable. I shall be quite satisfied with whatever choice your Editorial Board may make.'

Lady Wentworth became a member of The Poetry Society and presented our library with copies of her published books, complaining at the same time of the reluctant attitude by publishers towards poetry. 'Because on the strength of my having written some best-seller standard works of scientific research on thoroughbred race-horses and my work as a horse-breeder, my chief publishers refuse to consider Pegasus a fit stable-mate for Derby winners, and have so pinioned the winged side of my reputation that my name is becoming the monopoly of the horse-breeding and racing world.'

With deep regret we have to announce that Lady Wentworth died in hospital on 8th August. A baroness in her own right (created 1529), she was the daughter of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, and her maternal great-grandfather was Lord Byron. 'She inherited the love of the desert and of the horse of the desert, the Arabian, and the feeling for the desert never left her.' We quote from *The Times*, which recalled that in youth 'she was a society beauty': and she gave to Burne-Jones, for some of whose last studies she sat, 'the impression of perfect beauty combined with the speed and lightness of foot of some wild creature.' By then, it is to be added incidentally, she had become a champion royal tennis player.

As a New Year greeting this year she presented to the Chairman of the Editorial Board, for publication if he wished, an autographed replica of her portrait, painted by Neville Lytton. This beautiful picture will be reproduced in the next number of *The Poetry Review*, accompanied by several more of her poems and an appreciation by Lord Dunsany.

*

'If we read more poetry most of us would be better men.' So declared the Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. W. R. Matthews, preaching recently to the text of

St. Paul's hymn to divine love which ends 'The greatest of these is charity,' and he paid tribute to poetry in the following words:

> 'We cannot love, or, in any genuine sense, have goodwill towards another, unless we grasp imaginatively the fact that he is not simply a part of the landscape, or a population unit, but a person living like ourselves. "Put yourself in his place" is good advice, though to-day it probably demands an effort of the imagination beyond the reach of those who have left poetry behind. If we read more poetry most of us would be better men: we should be more ready to receive that most excellent gift of charity.'

*

How many of us, or how few, know that one of the poets who were approached by W. E. Gladstone about the Laureateship in the 1890's only died last July? He was Fred Henderson, a worker in the struggling Labour movement, a writer of verse who voiced the grievances and exposed the conditions of the slum-dwellers and the underpaid and underfed workers of those days. Such wide attention did Henderson's poems attract that he was invited to dine with the Prime Minister when Tennyson died, and he might have been Tennyson's successor in spite of the fact that for joining a deputation of unemployed he had served four months in prison. Incidentally, he was one of the last persons to be put to work on the treadmill. As a result of his campaigning as an ex-prisoner the treadmill punishment was abolished by Parliament.

Why was Fred Henderson never appointed to the Poet Laureateship? The answer is that he told the 'Grand Old Man' that he could never write odes for ceremonial occasions: and that settled the matter.

*

Laurence Housman, whose ninety-second birthday coincided with our 'Dedication' to him of the January-March number of *The Poetry Review*, has recalled in an interview that he read William Blake's 'The Divine Image' in the museum at South Kensington when he was eighteen and 'it has been my gospel ever since.'

'One of the things I have tried to do,' he said, 'is to get people not to be afraid of laughter.' Then, asked if the modern world with its by-product of 'angry young men' has disappointed him, he replied:

> 'What do not disappoint me are the tremendous discoveries that science has made. We have a notion now of the age of this world and of the sun, planets, and other things, only because science has begun to reveal it to us. Now we have got this fact to face, that the whole of the Bible teaching and what the Bible has revealed to us of God only refers to this world of ours. It does not refer to those thousands of other worlds, possibly millions . . .'

*

John ('Look Back in Anger') Osborne asked his Russian hosts: 'Who do you consider are our most important writers?' The Russian short list always included Jack Lindsay at the top, with Aldous Huxley and J. B. Priestley next . . . The work of another Jack, an old favourite of some of us, Jack London, is, according to another visitor to Russia, H. Montgomery Hyde, M.P., extremely popular 'apparently because Lenin liked him.' This, by the way, is not the reason at all. Jack London was Russia's favourite long before Lenin.

The Kipling Society is in danger of being closed down unless the membership increases. So the President, Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Browning, treasurer to the Duke of Edinburgh, has warned the members. A footnote to this is the latest specimen of irony: the Shelley family Bible which belonged to the poet's mother and in which she recorded the birth and baptism of each of her seven children, has been sold for £125.

*

Walter de la Mare was the subject of a course of lectures and readings during a June week-end in Oxfordshire – at the Braziers Park School of Integrative Social Research. Presided over by C. Dennis Pegge, a *Poetry Review* contributor, the Conference discussed – with illustrations – de la Mare's mastery of language, use of allegory, occasional irrationality, and powers of character and plot creation. Two partly compensating trends in his poetry both in form and content were referred to as on the one hand decreasing 'intensity' and on the other increasing 'breadth'.

A similar course on Walter de la Mare will be held early in October. Further particulars may be obtained from The Warden, Braziers Park, Ipsden, Oxon.

*

Poetry and music are the two arts which most often go together, and their association has been especially noticeable during this year's Edinburgh Festival. A play in verse, *The Hidden King*, has caused much discussion and controversy. And our friend Neville Cardus has contributed to *The Manchester Guardian* some of the ablest comment on this three weeks' 'pursuit of culture' :

> 'Of the singing of the Goethe "Night" songs nothing can be written except in praise of and gratitude for the realization in voice and diction of this incomparable union of sublime music and poetry. The miracle is – and it is a miracle that breaks the heart even as it uplifts it – that young Schubert, young till his death, could so easily, so tenderly, so resignedly, enter the world of Goethe's tranquil acceptance: "Thou that cometh from the heavens" – "Komm, ach komm, in meine Brust!" and attune his naturally happy heart to the sad benedictory "Wait awhile, rest thou too" – "Warte nur balde. Ruhest du auch." This poem, the most beautiful and wisest of all expressions of resignation and fulfilment, was written by Goethe on the wall of a hut in the hills of Ilmenau; and years after, he returned and read it with tears falling.'

*

Postscripts. – Kenneth Hare, whose work for *The Poetry Review* is done at his home at Bussage, near Stroud, Gloucestershire, has published through Robert Hale a new volume of poems with a title our readers will regard as characteristic *Nymphs and Rivers* . . . Rosalind Wade's new novel *Mrs. Jamison's Daughter* (Hutchinson) has had an exceptionally enthusiastic send-off . . . Paul Dehn, Randolph Stow, and Laurence Whistler were the three winners of poetry prizes at the Cheltenham Festival, and our colleague Richard Church was one of the judges . . . A distinguished member-poet, Teresa Hooley, gave this advice to the girls at a Nottingham School on speech-day: 'Beware of sailing the seven 'Cs' – clothes, cinemas, cigarettes, crooning, chocs, candlelight and chaps.'

EDITORIAL BOARD

FOR ROBERT FROST

VISITING ENGLAND JUNE 1957

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

Not done with apple-picking yet, I think?

Not quite. Not yet.

The years glow russet on the dappled tree,
And still your ladder rears to heaven's brink,
Clear through the laden boughs for all to see.

Still firmly set.

Four-score and more; and picking bravely through
The clustered heart, with scent of words and earth
Fragrant in poetry's perennial birth.

Bravely – ah, true.
My hands are two,
To gather what they can and pay life's debt.

Knowing that toil alone is living's worth
And from a seed the world begins anew.
Before the wind comes and the rest is strown
You'll lift down all you can, last basket filled
As beauty's purpose willed,
Known and unknown.

But that's not yet;
The years glow russet on the living tree,
And still your ladder rears to heaven's brink,
Clear through the laden boughs for all to see.

ROBERT FROST'S VISIT
'A HAPPY SUCCESS'

It is with pleasure that we have received from the U.S. Information Service, American Embassy, a gift which the official Librarian hopes will be a pleasant reminder of the recent visit of Robert Frost to 33 Portman Square 'and therefore serve as a token of appreciation for your assistance in making the visit such a happy success.'

AFTER LISTENING TO J. S. BACH

JOHN REDWOOD ANDERSON

Up to what height of archetypal sound
were we two lifted on the serene wings
of divine music – far from the common ground
of our two loves and life's familiar things?
What Paradise regained and again lost
did our souls visit for a timeless space –
and each a naked solitary ghost,
though locked together in our love's embrace?
Awful Perfection! and we listened there
in longing and in terror, and we knew
deep in our hearts man's last sublime despair,
and could not bear its anguish, but withdrew
from that still rapture of unhuman bliss,
as each sought refuge in the other's kiss.

TWO POEMS

JOHN SMITH

THE COUNTRY IN MY HEAD

The country in my head is a calm land
Of hills embroidered with trees where small streams run
Amber at evening among jade reeds and rushes,
A place where things come gently to the hand,
Where the elder bushes
Mute the soft air with luminous onyx shine;
A country of late richness with the autumn sun
Rinsing the meadows with thin white wine.

The country in my head is a secret place
Of lanes like dove-grey ribbons edged with brown,
The sweet air tinged with smoke and scent of apples,
Quinces and honey and old-man's-beard like lace
Where the gold sun dapples
The cobwebbed spidery hedge and the purple sloe;
A country where the small leaves drifting down
Float in the langorous air like amber snow.

And as shade darkens this country down to sleep,
White as the wings of swans a mist folds round
All the earth's treasure beautiful where it lies.
The envious dead out from their heavens creep,
  Their glittering eyes
Look down through cracks in the sky's floor at my land,
Their tears with glow-worms sparkle the milky ground.
Who walks in my country alone will understand.

SLOW-BURNING AUTUMN

The silver birches are on fire
  With a thin gold flame;
The sharp leaves of the briar
  Burn with a russet gleam;
The bramble rough with red
  Is a smouldering ember,
And beeches though they soon will blaze
  As yet are amber.

Late apples like old planets rage
  In smoking air;
Their sheen with too great age
  Grows rough and sere
But still they do not fall
    Though the bitter quince
Already hangs full grown
  By the dry fence.

Grass like a lion's ochre mane
  Furs the hard earth;
In hedges down the lane
  Nuts swell in the sheath;
While in old gardens still
  The Summer flowers;
Snapdragons by the flaking wall
  Raise up their spires.

Cornelian-bronze the pendent world
  Burns in a haze
Of thin mist whitely curled
  Like smoke under the trees:
Slow-burning autumn and
  Slow-going summer are one,
Deeply asleep, sharing
  The same gold dream.

CHESSMEN

BROOKE SPENCER

Dust gathers on their fine carved robes
and features delicately wrought;
so timeless is their attitude
that for a while the mind is caught.

Inscrutable, they seem to stand
poised in an Oriental dance;
each waiting for the player's hand
to give them life, significance.

SPLENDID REVOLT

DIANA SHELLEY

Do not mourn the death of leaves:
It is a vivid, splendid thing,
A reckless gesture of delight
Flung boldly out against the creeping cold,
A brazen fanfare of farewell.

To know green summer's many-shadowed days
Fold closer with each mothy, shrouded dusk;
To feel the spiteful first-frost prick of winter
Injecting worn-out veins with tingling rime,
While sap, declining softly hour by hour,
Sinks to the last sharp cramp, the fluttering
To colourless decay.

To scorn such dull defeat
Whose hours of withered hanging-on
Delay the final wrench of death,
To raise, instead, in sudden blaze
Brilliant, brief rebellion's flags
To flare the brooding sky;
Massing, in one last riotous assault
The burning autumn rabble
Against grey winter's sure advance:
This is a brave extravagant revolt
Which merits more than mourning!

AUTUMN CROCUS

FOR CONSTANCE

JOHN GRADDON

Earth, the conjurer, with unseen props
Shows her yearly miracles
Of colour, shape and scent
To all who walk her broad flanks.
For all to see, for even those
Who see and are unseeing.

The spring of the earth
Leaps to the eye,
Leaps the gay heart,
The ever-young heart,
In the spring of the year.

Summer scents the yielding earth,
Lays the hot air on the bleached eyes
Of those who, standing to work,
Move the affairs of man
To ripeness and fruit.

Then, when the heart is braced
And the body resigned
To meet the stiletto of the cold,
Then, in the Fall of the spirit,
Quiet, alone and unaccompanied,
Comes the Autumn Crocus
With a stem as white
As the first thought;
With a colour as tender
As the first hyacinth blush.

A GIFT FOR CHRISTMAS

SPECIAL NOTE. – The January-March number of *The Poetry Review* will be published in early December. This enables Members and Readers to secure extra copies as Christmas Gifts – and, better still, to present a friend or friends with a year's subscription. (For particulars, see back of cover of this issue).

MY FATHER DRUDGED . . .

PAUL SELVER

My father drudged ten hours a day,
Full forty years or more:
Cross-legged he sat and stitched away
To keep the wolf from the door.

He fashioned, wielding needle and shears,
Raiment for flunkeys and such
Who lurk at the portals of nabobs and peers,
And bow and scrape overmuch.

The raiment was goodly to gaze upon,
Cobalt, maroon and fawn;
And I hankered after the buttons that shone
Like the gold of a summer dawn.

My father drudged ten hours a day
To keep the wolf from the door,
And a hundred a year was the peak of his pay
With never a hope of more.

And if for a moment or two, perchance,
He happened to lift an eye,
Beyond a vast, blank wall, his glance
Met a tiny wedge of sky.

Yet sometimes he warbled a sprightly song,
A Polish village air,
As though he had never suffered wrong,
As though he knew nothing of care.

He sang in tune with the thud and hiss
Of the iron he nimbly plied,
While a sleek old tabby purred with bliss,
Lazily coiled at his side.

But when he chanted a synagogue lay,
I knew that his soul was in pain;
The wolf at the door was no longer at bay,
Or some rig to be basted again.

But of the two, more often he chose
The mournful Hebrew lay,
And as though he was stricken with age-old woes
His face was drawn and grey.

He died long since. His spirit is still.
His years of toil have passed.
But they haunted me ever, and ever will,
Unto the very last.

WOODLAND INCANTATION

HEDA MONRO

He who beheld that almond tree in bloom
has been bewitched, its scent is in his blood,
for he shall see a thousand starry trees
grow in the Persian carpet of his mind,
and tall princesses walking through the wood
to meet him in spring's green and vaulted room.

As mute as flowers they are, and intertwined
with webs of quietness; the bees
move on the dusty stamens without sound.
In oriental richness dressed and crowned
they pause as if to dream within his dream
where shadows of the floating petals fall
slowly aslant their faces in a stream
of unimagined thoughts; their cheeks are flushed
as almond buds, like porcelain each throat,
their eyes – old branches shining in the rain,
almost it seems they are the trees again.

He calls, and hears his voice fall on the hushed
expectant air, but, hollow and unheard,
he has no being there until they hear
the singing of a legendary bird.
If only he could wait, but always fear
as a thin fluting quivering on the air
comes piercingly and blinds him with its pain.
He hears their dresses rustling like leaves,
and knows the wind is loosening their hair;
he feels each stinging strand like driven rain;
swift in the storm they vanish with his fear.
But he, remembering their beauty, grieves
In haunted loneliness throughout the year.

SESTINA

N. W. WALLACE

There is a place
I have never found,
On a cloistral blue-green bay:
A place of rest
Embraced by the sun
And washed by the moon-rocked sea.

Beyond the sea
There is a race
I have never yet begun,
Over ground
That is ever blest
By the bright of a summer day.

There is a day
Which is wholly free
From the passing terrible test
Of time; whose face
Is not quietly drowned
In cares for work to be done.

The work to be done
And the words I must say,
Like high walls all around,
Obscure from me
The feeble trace
Of all that is free and is best.

There is a best
I have not won,
Transcending little space
Of minds that pray
But cannot be,
In storm weather, starlight bound.

There is no bound
To my mind's quest,
Except humanity;
There is no-one
To lead the way
To that magical rainbow place.

THE CASE FOR THE OLDER POETRY

STANTON A. COBLENTZ

After the many centuries and lands in which poetry has been a light in darkness and a song in the world's ears, it may seem a little late for a defence of the poetic art. Yet such a defence is required, if only because poetry is ceasing to be a light in darkness and a song in the world's ears. It is well known, of course, that our recent verse writers have taken new paths, to such an extent that the old paths have been all but obliterated in the United States, and considerably obscured in England. Whether those new paths have led to richer meadows is a question that might be argued endlessly; but what cannot be argued is that many of our versifiers have set forth with an *either-or* attitude that compels a choice between the new and the old.

For in poetry, by some odd twist of thought that does not apply in homely fields such as cookery or gardening or house-building, the trail-blazer feels that he must censor to death all the old methods. Perhaps this is not true of every trail-blazer, but you need only open your eyes in order to see the tendency: periodicals devoted to *avant-garde* verse do not print poetry in the technical manner of Tennyson or Keats; collections by the leaders of 'modernism' are, ordinarily, collections in one style only; anthologies compiled by apostles of the new movement are monopolized by the output of the new movement, except when they cover writers too well known to be neglected. Reviews by exponents of the new cause, correspondingly, are apt to berate the upholders of the older standards as much as they applaud the acolytes of the new; prize awards, when the judges are of the more 'advanced' persuasion, are certain to go to poets of the more 'advanced' creed.

All this, of course, might be defended if it could be shown that the poetic tools of yesterday had no longer any utility. But the reverse is, I believe, demonstrably the case. While making no apology for the aberrations of certain old-time traditionalists, I submit that we have thrown overboard a bag of pearls in order to rid ourselves of some incidental pebbles. And to the extent possible within a few brief pages, I should like to indicate why I believe this to be so.

To begin with the self-evident – the very point suggested in my opening lines – the older poetry has always been related to song. A. E. Housman, one of its most distinguished recent practitioners, can write with a musical impulse even in his simplest observations:

> Far in a western brookland
> That bred me long ago
> The poplars stand and tremble
> By pools I used to know.

Here is something that you can carry in your mind, and repeat over and over with pleasure – which would not be possible, for example, with lines such as these by Stephen Spender:

> Shapes of death haunt life,
> Neurosis eclipsing each in special shadow:
> Unrequited love not solving
> The need to become another's body
> Wears black invisibility . . .

The enthusiast for Mr. Spender's work may contend that it has merits denied the other selection. This may or may not be true; but the fact I wish to bring out is that it does not sing, and therefore is nothing you can repeat time after time in your head. And because it is nothing that you can repeat time after time in your head, it is not memorable.

Associated with this memorable quality, the best traditional verse has a compactness unmatched by any other form of expression – and this because it takes discipline to squeeze words dry of their full essence of meaning. It would, for example, be difficult to say how a satisfying thought could be expressed in fewer words than in Margaret Hope's quatrain 'Wool-gathering', in *The Poetry Review* for October–December, 1956:

> 'Wool-gathering!' the teacher thinks, and raps
> Upon her desk: while slowly, piece by piece,
> Young Susan goes on gathering, perhaps
> The scattered remnants of the Golden Fleece.

Not only compactness but finality is made possible by the rigorous technique behind these lines. Alter one word, and the effect will not be the same; remove the rhymes, though without changing the meaning, and you will have compactness without finality. With apologies to Miss Hope, I offer:

> 'Wool-gathering!' the teacher thinks, and knocks
> Upon her desk: while slowly, bit by bit,
> Young Susan goes on gathering, perhaps
> The scattered remnants of the Golden Fleece.

The same – and yet not the same! The force of the idea is weakened, its epigrammatic incisiveness gone. And all the difference is produced by a single tool of the older technique, rhyme.

One feature of this poem is its suggestiveness; and suggestiveness, while possible with form or without, is somehow enhanced by the regularity of a beat that causes no distractions – that does not divert the reader to the author's manner or mannerisms. John Drinkwater,

amid the conventional rhythms of a sonnet, can plant infinite suggestions in lines such as:

> When Liverpool is one with dusty Troy,
> And London famed as Attica for wit.

And Robert Bridges, in the opening stanza of his well-known *Elegy*, writes with a suggestiveness powerfully enhanced by the regularity of his form:

> The wood is bare: a river-mist is steeping
> The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves:
> Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping
> Over their fallen leaves.

Here, despite the gloomy atmosphere, the poet has an evident regard for that intangible known as 'beauty' – a word that now lies beneath the *hush*, *hush* of an unofficial censorship. Yet no matter what the dogmas of the 'new look' in poetry, beauty has long spoken to man in things vague and intangible but as real as the towering emotions within us; successive generations have sought and found this element in poetry ever since and before the day of David's first song. And this ingredient, though increasingly scorned by the hymners of hog butchers and ash cans, is encouraged in traditional verse by technical rigors that compel a poet to concentrate not only on what he says but on how he says it, so that he and his audience may come to share a veneration for beauty, such veneration as is repeatedly expressed by John Masefield:

> Even when the full-leaved summer bore no fruit
> You gave me this, this apple of man's tree . . .
> Beauty, this grace, this spring, this given bread,
> This life, this dawn, this wakening from the dead.

I might continue indefinitely, offering example after example. I might show that technical competence of the older type, while not a guaranty of comprehensibility, does tend to produce more comprehensible verse, perhaps because of the emphasis which it demands upon the means of expression. I might point out that technique, far from being a hindrance, is often a guide to the poet, a monitor along the way. And I might add that the guardianship of technique is so essential that none but the rare great genius can be trusted to work without it.

But a stronger argument remains – one that cannot be rebutted, since it has behind it the experience of three thousand years. This argument, simply stated, is that the case for traditional poetry has already been proved. It has been proved by Pindar and Virgil, Petrarch and Dante, Tasso and Leopardi, Goethe and Heine, Hugo

and Baudelaire, Pushkin and Mickiewitz, Chaucer and Milton and Shelley and a host of others. And at the borders of our own day, it has been demonstrated anew by Hardy and A. E. Housman, Flecker and Francis Ledwidge and Rupert Brooke, Masefield and Yeats and Noyes, and others too numerous to mention. The quality of attainment made possible by the older poetry – the poetry of a rigorous technique – is evident from the quality it has stimulated throughout the ages, and even in our own times.

Here then, in the testament of the poets themselves, is our answer. Here, in those shining attainments that have been among mankind's chief justifications in a world otherwise criss-crossed with ugliness and rapine, we find indications of the vastness of our loss and the severity of the blow against civilization if the furor for innovation and a false idea of progress should cost us the perfected poetic tools and the grandeurs of expression for which our fathers agonized and by which they rose to greatness.

NIGHT SONG

ROY MACGREGOR-HASTIE

Somewhere, perhaps over there, you smile, and sigh,
Where the moon silvers a South Australian sky,
Antarctic glow that counterfeits the sun,
mocking the warmth of life to one
who knew, for such a little time, desire.

How strange it is that we, who build
the roads along which man
must lead his heavy-burdened caravan
to the market-place of Hopes and Fears
that some call Paradise,
should seldom find our minutes filled
with Happiness, as are our eyes with tears.

How little do we know of love,
who know it to be all
that any man could hope to have befall
him as his accident of destiny;
who are its own ambassadors,
yet never to our capital return,
and see it only from above,
live a dove,
which contemplates in flight some human ecstasy.

Here all around me are my books and manuscript;
of passions long since dead, the gloomy crypt,
the storehouse of the optimism of the past.

And here, in the night, alone am I –
and somewhere, perhaps over there, you smile, and sigh.

TWO POEMS

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

SEPTEMBER BUTTERFLY

Summer is fading over hedge and hill;
The night creeps slowly as a closing door,
Lost leaves, gold-tinged, are swirling down the rill
While granaries are gathering in their store.
Still has the sunny day the gayest tone,
A child awake that sings before its sleep
Though night and winter stride to claim their own
Till Christmas shepherds guard the resting sheep.
Now, like a light that flickers down the street
Before a town anticipates the dusk,
One last bright butterfly, trembling and fleet,
Flirts in late rapture over corn and musk;
To send slim shadows dancing on my heart
Warm from a summer sun that must depart.

THE GAUNTLET

Take up your glove again, I shall not fight.
I will not be provoked to feign a hate.
Let action rest until to-morrow's light
Casts cooling shadows on our present state.
Did I offend? It was in thoughtless jest.
I count a life as worth a greater cost;
A grander principle, a rarer test
Than paid as forfeit for a temper lost.
Say what you will; coward or faint of heart.
Pick up your glove; replace it on your hand.
Though we who loved upon this issue part
Now all the past shall, to my comfort, stand.
I do but fight only as when I must;
The cause imperative, my purpose just.

BENEDICITE!

MARIE TELLO-PHILLIPS

A gilded casement in a holy place
Shed golden glory on two kneeling there,
With hearts that throbbed in tune to melody
Of angel choirs. They felt the presence near
Of loved ones gone before, returned to cheer.

Their thoughts were raised in rapture to His face,
Ascending with the incense and myrrh
And voices murmuring, 'Benedicite',
To humbly pledge their faith, and ask His aid
With love and loyalty for man and maid.

AFTERNOON IN LONDON

REMEMBERED IN ATHENS

OLGA PAPASTAMOU

One feels that something is departing,
Travelling to the horizon;
The whole street hums . . .
People are finding a life which is their own
For this evening and to-morrow, uniting them,
All going forward
With a hint of laughter in their eyes.
The light, soft as honey, casts a reflection
Which sparkles towards the dark autos,
A sheet of rolled gold
With a sigh like the soul of birds
Waiting for rapture
In the free fluttering of wings . . .
Beyond the sunset,
Below the bridge over the grey river
A passion from the north
Is reflected,
And a tempest, and a calm drizzle
Of thousands of lights, colours,
And sober reality.
I stretch out my hand to see
If I can touch in the crowd
A little of the sweetness of shelter from the wind
Which descends from the sky before me.

SMALL CONCEITS

PAMELA PAGE

Wrap up this cruel day; forget
The bright anticipation:
Without the day's dismay and tears
What worth the day's elation?

Or sleep as a squirrel in the dark
Sleeps through the winter's pain,
Knowing dimly, through layers of sleep,
That spring will come again.

Sleep where pain is: learn to wake
To the moment's laughter. Time is made
For moulding; by such small conceits
Our master-hand is played.

THE SPRING POET

JANE SCOTT PARSONS

I love, I love, the simple rhymer who,
  Scorned in the names of greater poets, still
Voices his yearly theme, well-sung 'cuckoo' –

Whose rebel fancies stir and freshly thrill
  To Spring's recurring song, her lamb that skips,
The thousand dances of her daffodil –

Who sends his rhymes upon their hopeful trips
  Collecting, when in due time they arrive
Inevitably, his rejection-slips.

I marvel how his fallow heart can thrive
  Upon the kisses of an annual shame,
How his poetic spirit keeps alive

From year to year. And then I think his claim
  To sing and to be heard may yet read well,
Endorsed by some benign, immortal name

In what high Poets' Circle, who can tell?

THE REFLECTION

MURIEL GRAINGER

Your eyes hold the arrow
That pierces me.
Your face wears my sorrow
For all to see.

Trouble and terror
Your own heart knows.
In me, your mirror,
Their image grows.

Giving, receiving,
From glass to glass,
My grief and your grieving
Must ever pass.

THE WATCH

WILLIS EBERMAN

There, on the ancient desk, in the blue velvet box it lies,
Wound nightly, wound daily, worn about;
Returned to the desk at nightfall. The golden ticking ties
Our hearts together. I have no more doubt
That you are living when I hold it in my hand.
It is warm and pulsating, though the gold is thin
  at a place on the band
Where your fingers for decades had rubbed it.
'This will be yours,' you'd say to me. You had
So little of gold to leave. We would fall silent,
Not wanting to think of the end – I was glad
That, nearing ninety, you were so young, though
  your hand was cold.

I remember I rose in the dusk and lit
Candles on all the shelves, and refilled your glass.
We would sing the old songs again; you would take out the gold
Ticking reminder of time, and would casually say,
'It's time to go home.' And so you went away.

Now on the ancient desk, by your picture, it unravels the years:
The gleaming half of my heart, devoid of tears.

THE ENGLISH SONNET

HERBERT PALMER

I

In Palgrave's much admired and most famous anthology *The Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics* there occur a number of very shapely short poems which close examination and sensitive response of eye and ear reveal as sonnets. This quite ordinary information, however, may stir the undertones of a query. What is a sonnet?

A sonnet is not any kind of short lyric or song-poem, as is sometimes supposed by the half-interested man-in-the-street, but one which obeys strict rules and moves within a confining mode. Though a certain amount of flexibility and walk-about space is allowed within the palisaded areas of this mode, there are no side wicket-gates leading to abandoned spontaneity. The sonnet must contain only and exactly fourteen lines, and these lines should be written in what is known as iambic pentameter, which is the metre of Shakespeare's plays, Milton's *Paradise Lost,* Pope's *Essay on Man,* and other long English poems.

But the lines must be rhymed, and many of them otherwise than as regards Pope's heroic couplets, for some threading repetition or simple inter-threading of the rhymes is required. The Shakespearean sonnet contains as many as seven rhymes, but the more rigorous forms involve only four or five rhymes, some as few as only three, and the Earl of Surrey wrote one sonnet on only two rhymes. Blank-verse sonnets, to my knowledge, have never been successfully written, though if lavish use of assonance, alliteration and internal half-rhyme could sufficiently deceive the ear I see no reason why they should not be successful. But the blank-verse device of trochees (and even anapaests) introduced into the iambic framework is, of course, frequently made use of, to give greater singing power, variation, or impetus to the lines.

The sonnet is a very formal concession to the musical ear and to the mind's occasional demand for great condensation in imaginative expression. Its limit of fourteen lines bears witness to no emotional accident or captiousness but to something inevitable and almost divinely ordered. Though, oddly enough, its division into two parts (and the most formal sonnets are divided into two parts) is not in the way of a seven and a seven, but an eight and a six, into octave and sestet. The occurrence of the sonnet was the inevitable result of many decades of continental experiments, chiefly Italian, and the word 'sonnet' is said to be derived from the Italian word 'sonnetto', a short strain, or little sound, and probably it was originally any kind of short love poem sung or recited to the strains of a musical instrument.

But emotional purists and finicking metrical artists vied with one

another to invent a permanent restricted shape that would please everybody, and finally two great Italian poets, Dante and Petrarch, came out on the top of the sonnet hillock. Petrarch is credited with having displayed the greatest skill and emotional power with this short poem, and although he did not in any way invent the final shape, his name will be closely associated with it for all time. It was introduced into England in the reign of Henry VIII by two gifted young English noblemen who had travelled in Italy, Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey; and the first appearance of any of their sonnets in printed book form was in the verse collection *Tottel's Miscellany*, published in 1553. But Wyatt did not stick completely to the Italian form, for he ended his sonnets with rhymed couplets, and Surrey widely experimented. Indeed, Surrey invented a new form, and one which was later to be taken over by Sir Philip Sidney, though he frequently used Wyatt's form.

But let us listen to one of Sidney's Surreyan-shaped sonnets – a turning away from his frequent contemplation of erotic love:

Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things!
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.

O take fast hold! let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world! thy uttermost I see:
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

This Surrey form was also used by Sir Walter Raleigh and other Elizabethans, in particular by those frequent masters of resonance and fluency, Samuel Daniel and Michael Drayton, and then, about the same time, or directly afterwards, by William Shakespeare.* Indeed, Shakespeare gave his name to this particular kind of English sonnet, so that instead of being known as the Surreyan sonnet it is to-day called the Shakespearean sonnet, to distinguish it from the more frequent and tighter-laced Petrarchan forms of the sonnets written in English in later times. The rhyme arrangement of the octave is *a b a b c d c d* and of the sestet *e f e f g g*, the final rhymed couplet coming like a hammer-blow to complete the emotion or thought. It will also be noticed that most of the Shakespearean

*The dates of publication mean nothing because books of verse were passed about so much in MS. and influenced other poets before being printed.

sonnets divide themselves, in a secondary aspect, into three four-lined stanzas before arriving at the rhymed couplet, though printers do not always make the divisions.

Occasional falsities of rhyme, such as *over–recover* or *proved–loved* are, in most instances, due to changes in pronunciation. But a powerful and sombre sonnet by Daniel contains a more certain false rhyme, *born–return*, which sounds as conscious or deliberate as the slight deviation from the strict form of the octave:

> Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
> Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,
> Relieve my anguish and restore the light;
> With dark forgetting of my care, return:
> And let the day be time enough to mourn
> The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth;
> Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn
> Without the torment of the night's untruth.
>
> Cease dreams, the images of day's desires
> To model forth the passions of the morrow;
> Never let rising Sun approve you liars,
> To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
> Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
> And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

This form reached its culmination when Shakespeare adopted it. Though many of the sonnets of his long sequence are indifferent in texture or obscure in meaning or diction, at least a score respond glowingly to nearly every demand of criticism or appreciation. It is the greatest sonnet sequence in the English tongue, and by far the most interesting, for it seems to tell a tale, to reveal secrets in Shakespeare's life, so that we take the sour with the sweet, the muddied with the pellucid, and are completely captivated. Much controversy has waged over these sonnets, and there have been many discussions as to who was the dark lady and who were T.T. and Mr. W. H. of the dedication.

During the same period, Edmund Spenser, who can be regarded as the poet-laureate of the Elizabethan Age, deviated with a form that was new in England, a sort of combination or inter-lacing of the Shakespearean and Petrarchan forms – for its rhyme arrangement in the octave is *a b a b b c b c*, and in the sestet *c d c d e e*. Part of the rhyme arrangement of the octave, it will be noticed, flows into the sestet, and anyone who reads through his *Amoretti* of eighty-eight sonnets will also notice that the break between octave and sestet is sometimes not at all pronounced. This form of the sonnet has come to be known as the Spenserian. One of the

least known of the *Amoretti** is especially striking in declamation:

My love is like to ice, and I to fire;
How comes it then that this her cold so great
Is not dissolv'd through my so hot desire
But harder grows the more I her entreat?
Or how comes it that my exceeding heat
Is not delay'd by her heart-frozen cold;
But that I burn much more in boiling sweat
And feel my flames augmented manifold?
What more miraculous thing may be told
Than fire, which all things melts, should harden ice;
And ice which is congeal'd with senseless cold
Should kindle fire by wonderful device?
Such is the power of love in gentle mind
That it can alter all the course of kind.

But the Spenserian sonnet was never to exercise much hold over later poets, nor indeed, even stranger and a thing to be greatly wondered at, was the Shakespearean. By the end of the reign of Charles I the Shakespearean sonnet was practically dead and buried, and from henceforth more than eighty per cent of English sonnets were to be written in the Petrarchan mould. With Oliver Cromwell began a new political order, and with his secretary John Milton began a new period of sonnet literature. Austere and completely disciplined himself, John Milton chose the more exacting form of Petrarch, and this has prevailed until the present day. In the hands of all poets except the most accomplished and fluent technicians it is a strait-jacket form, and it is most astonishing that the English tongue (which is not rich in rhymes) has produced so many fine examples. But what is this form which has so hypnotized many of our major poets and more than half our good minors since the days of Milton? The octave is truly very exacting for it is *a b b a a b b a* – only two rhymes. But the sestet allows some licence, and the most conservative rhyme arrangement is *c d e c d e*. This, however, is rarely used, the rhymes being so far apart that a blank verse effect is produced. The arrangement *c d c d c d* is more frequent, though almost any kind of variation is orthodox so long as the sestet does not begin or end with a rhymed couplet. So the characteristic Shakespearean climax, the hammer-blow is avoided. Instead, there is a gradual dying away of the volume of sound, a receding. The octave has been compared to an onrushing wave, the sestet to a receding wave.

(*to be continued*)

* But the ninth line of this specially chosen sonnet will not scan unless the reciter pauses after 'thing'. Spenser evidently counted syllables, in this place to the cost of foot, quantity and natural accent. In the next line there is probably an Elizabethan misprint, so I have altered 'that' to 'than'. But perhaps Spenser wrote 'than that', then noticing a syllable too many deleted 'than', the wrong word to delete to any modern ear.

THE UNCERTAIN CLOUD

ALEXANDER BUIST

You have emerged out of a pit of shadows,
From your first challenge by the Lord of Men;
One greatly loved walks the Elysian meadows,
Happier now he cannot come again.

*

Seeing your eyes makes me feel greyer, older;
I have no word to compass your distress;
The consolations of the world grow colder,
With each new victim Death more meaningless.

*

If true dawn wait behind this threat of slaughter,
It shall be ours; still to the low mists cling
Bog-myrtle scents and sigh of windless water;
Above the uncertain cloud a lark may sing.

THE RAINBOW'S FOOL

ODETTE TCHERNINE

Behind the eyes the world unfurls
from inward-moving camera spool.
There is no money in those prints,
their owner is the rainbow's fool
when silently the skyline roofs
turn into mountain rims of blue,
and through the milling city streets
a flash recalls where palm trees grew . . .

St. Paul's becomes the Sugar-Loaf,
grey thread of Thames the Rio Grande;
behind the eyes, behind the eyes
burn opal seas and ivory sand.

LIFE

ELSIE M. BANISTER

Life is not measured by our flow of talk,
Nor by our strength, nor by the miles we walk,
But by our selves, and, when our breath departs,
By memories we leave in others' hearts.

SAPPHO

E. B. W. CHAPPELOW

Still the immortal voice
Sounds in my ears, clear, low,
Bidding my heart rejoice
With the music of long ago,

Bidding my heart be glad
With note upon liquid note
Welling up out of the sad
Years from the golden throat,

Bringing me over the years
The Lesbian rapture, the sighs,
Laughter, lost love and tears
Under the Asian skies,

Till I who have ever loved
Beauty and shall to the end,
Whom ever her songs have moved,
Know me her brother and friend,

And as I commune with her,
Who still is a living breath,
I whisper, 'O Phosphor Star,
O Muse, there is no death!'

THE AREND-ROLAND COMET

CATHERINE BLAKISTON

Into the chilling night of early Spring
Was born this lovely, unaccustomed thing –
A drift of spray – a gossamer of light,
Scarce luminous, nor ever really bright,
But there to hold the seeing eye entranced
Where constellations reigned ere this advanced.
Whence came this light with frail, intriguing wake,
Its purposeful, mysterious way to make,
This lustrous traveller into the starlit sky? –
Whence came this lovely thing O God, and why?

Book Reviews . . .

'FOR EVER WINGS THE SPOKEN WORD'

MARJORIE FFRANGCON-DAVIES

The Poetry Society's Verse Speaking Anthology, 1957 (The Poetry Society, 7s. 6d. Subsidized price 4s. 6d. to members, students and children).

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar:
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

Do these words of genius depict just a mood, a fancy, a make-believe? Or are they a flash of rational perception depicting a measured interval, period, or season, in the span we call a life? Whatever our reaction may be, if poetry says anything to us at all such words cannot fail in their impact. And so the adventurer in the realms of poesy (by no means a wanderer in the abstract) pushes forward the boundaries of thought, and from treasuries old and new he charts his path.

The Poetry Society's anthology of these treasuries is admirable in its catholicity. Assembled with a deep thoughtfulness of purpose it will be valued by all who love poetry and would introduce its magic to others.

It must be emphasized that in the main this volume leans to the moderns. Volumes of classics are easily accessible, and so, while including examples of early poetry, the main bulk of poems are drawn from over sixty modern authors. The wideness of choice, however, may be indicated by the inclusion of Arthur Hugh Clough's 'Say not the struggle naught availeth' and Dylan Thomas's 'Death shall have no dominion'. If the present reviewer were asked to fix the pearl of great price it might be Shakespeare's 'Dirge for Fidele' and on the last empty page of the volume, left perhaps for notes, 'My last Duchess' might be added and 'Love among the ruins' by Robert Browning.

The young student who loves poetry and wants new material to learn and enjoy is safe here. For him there are old ballads, alliterations that pick up the rumble of engine-wheels and the wind's song – and also lullabies, songs of and for pets – and even the spaceman is not forgotten!

For ambitious readers prompted to try their skill in Festival Competitions this volume promises a rewarding search. They will find many poems that fire the imagination and test the technical skill. Thus they will be encouraged to accept the useful rule in aesthetics that inspiration backed by knowledge produces sounder results than one without the other.

The anthology has been collected by a group of experts – teachers, examiners, and poets; and may be trusted to lessen the labours of those who need good material for their students. Moreover, a volume so diversified could scarcely fail to impart pleasure wherever it found its way. Can it be too much to say that in spite of mankind's restless strivings to achieve a climax of knowledge knowledge which may injure or bless him – poetry along with the other arts

persuades humanity towards the door that opens on to a realm where, undisturbed, we perceive 'intimations of immortality', as Wordsworth did, seeing –

> meadow, grove and stream,
> The earth and every common sight,
> . . . Apparelled in celestial light,
> The glory and the freshness of a dream?

MRS. DYLAN THOMAS AND ANOTHER

STEPHEN GRAHAM

Leftover Life to Kill, by Caitlin Thomas (Putnam, 18s.).
Richard Hovey, Man and Craftsman, by Allan Houston Macdonald (Duke University Press, 37s. 6d.).

Leftover Life to Kill, an autobiographical fragment, gives a picture of what Mrs. Dylan Thomas is like, but does not explain how she got that way. There is a wistful reference to 'my halcyon Isadora Duncan days' and one can suppose a beautiful young woman, unspoiled and glamorous, impulsive, sparkling and brimming over with poetic inspiration for some parlous youth. And something similar could be thought about the young Dylan Thomas. Time was when he was a delightful stripling: glory of youth, and all that, shone in his soul. If you could arrest a moment in past time and poise these two – Caitlin and Thomas – as they once were, you might ask the questions: how will they develop and what will life do to them at the last? But it would have been hard to guess the correct answers.

The widow tries to tell the story of her personal life since her husband's death. Hence the title of the book. She is distraught, disgruntled and disordered. Underlying her words there seems to be a violent grievance against society, against herself and against Dylan. From page to page there is a grim-visaged threat to one's peace of mind. Hamlet asked himself why he should unpack his heart with words like a drab and Mrs. Thomas could do the same. A pity she rushed into print: in five or ten years' time she might have written a much better book about herself and Dylan Thomas. Frankly what she has tried to write about herself in Italy has but little interest and her very long sentences are baffling. Come, the full stop!

About Dylan's genius, nothing significant. He screamed when he heard mice in the wainscot. No doubt he screamed louder if he saw them and they were not there. Heaven will forgive him. The women in America hunted the poor poet in packs but they did not catch him. They did not catch up with him. Caitlin Thomas implies that she did catch up long ago, but is unable to tell us what it was like. Sorry to have so many grievances, but it is a difficult book.

In America nowadays poets are sought personally much more than they are here, and a poet can make a living by merely appearing in women's clubs and reading his verse. It was for instance something like this that almost killed Vachel Lindsay: he went on reciting his poems 'while his head was having a hole bored right through it'. But poets do require some extra aid from society if they are not to starve. They used to starve, especially if they were minor poets. We have now a biography of Richard Hovey who was

born ninety years ago and died young. He did not starve but he was not sufficiently encouraged. To have been lionized could have helped him to live and indeed to excel himself, which was what he needed to do.

Hovey craved to write something more masculine and robust than Tennyson's poetry, but could not do it. He had 'the scorn of scorn' but he did not have 'the love of love'. He was a rebel against nambypambyism, hypocrisy and the pretty-pretty. He felt himself to be an 'anointed poet' and not merely anointed with Macassar oil. He may have been right and had in him songs which he would have sung had the social climate in America been warmer. That was how it was in the nineties. When Thomas went to America the social climate for poets had become hot; perhaps in his case, too hot. It is likely that if he had not gone to the States he would have been living yet. But of Richard Hovey who died of a blood clot on the heart when he was thirty-six one may say that he does not seem to have been sufficiently encouraged.

RIDING HIGH

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

Pegasus and Other Poems, by Cecil Day Lewis (Jonathan Cape, 10s. 6d.).
Poems 1943–1956, by Richard Wilbur (Faber & Faber, 15s.).
Great Praises, by Richard Eberhart (Chatto & Windus, 10s. 6d.).
Visitations, by Louis MacNeice (Faber & Faber, 10s. 6d.).

In spite of the hard, straight line which Freud ruled between one era of poetry and the next, even the psychologists have had to fall back on myth for their nomenclature – Oedipus, or Psyche herself. These personifications are useful in providing a deep and wide but not too private image (since mythology is now a popular quiz-query subject) and poets in particular have always found scope there for creative exploration, somewhat sketchily enlightened though some may be by peeps into penny psychologies.

In the first section of C. Day Lewis's *Pegasus* there is nothing sketchy, as one would expect, in these re-creations of myth in contemporary terms. They are delightful pieces, with that bloom and texture so sadly lacking in the red-brick school who are only too apt to replace the hackneyed by the acned. And of course we can trust Mr. Lewis, having captured his Pegasus, not to go hacking, even if there is an occasional slight tinge of the palfrey about his steed. His other, less romantic poems, are most excellently civilized and there is a good one on Matthew Arnold.

As we have four established craftsmen in our list, our American two have nothing to do with the bronco-busting brotherhood. Richard Wilbur can turn a lyric, full of substance, with grace and penetration. He has a particular feeling for pictures and movement, seen in 'Grace', 'Poplar', 'Sycamore', and 'L'Etoile', although, in the last, it is difficult to understand how an ear obviously accustomed to non-American French can use *maitre de ballet* and *away* even as an off-beat rhyme.

Richard Eberhart is a dignified elder poet who can be tender while going deep (one of the proper prizes of maturity). In 'What The Senses Tell' he says:

> As I grow older, slowly, colder,
> I close with mastery of words.
> I begin to know as I grow bolder,
> What I, swiftly, wish to say.

How satisfying this poem is when all around we see people afraid to trust their senses any more.

Louis MacNeice seems less successful in 'having the world whole' and in not growing bolder. It is interesting to compare the respective philosophies of the three elder poets on growing older. Both Day Lewis ('The Years O') and MacNeice (the title poem) say much the same as Eberhart in the poem quoted above, though he is the most succinct. And it is good to feel the true artist's invincible buoyancy and forward impulse though the steed is schooled and the reins lie easy in the hand. Pegasus in *haute école* you might say.

AND STILL THEY COME

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

On the Poetry of Keats, by E. C. Pettet (Camb. University Press, 35s.).
The Poetry of Experience, by Robert Langbaum (Chatto and Windus, 21s.).
Shakespeare's Word Play, by M. M. Mahood (Methuen, 18s.).
The Poet's Way of Knowledge, Henry Sidgwick Memorial Lecture 1956, by C. Day Lewis (Camb. University Press, 5s.).

A country that could hardly afford food and yet lavished money on countless cookery books would be considered daft. For food substitute poetry, and for the many Mrs. Beetons the endless volumes, almost always by non-poets, analysing what poetry is, and the anomaly is no less fantastic. With this comic and tragic reservation in mind, all these four books are good reading and of value.

Mr. Pettet has the prime virtue of being in love with his subject, almost threadbare by now though it is. He traces with affectionate fidelity the rapid development of Keats from 'Sleep and Poetry' to the great odes, and enthusiastically examines almost line by line the poet's vocalic and consonantal patternings. He concludes with a timely but rather too guarded a vindication of Keats in answer to recent disparagements of him as a mere adolescent by the self-professed tough guys of the contemporary Parnassus.

Robert Langbaum is a young American scholar who copiously studies the dramatic monologue in literary tradition with special reference to Browning, Tennyson, Eliot and others, and discusses its affinities with the Shakespearean soliloquy. One very welcome sign is that he and others of the younger generation are discovering the greatness of Browning, especially the nobility and variousness of *The Ring and the Book*.

Miss Mahood pleasantly purls along with comment on the types of pun and quibble to be found in *Antony and Cleopatra, Romeo and Juliet, Richard II The Sonnets, Macbeth, A Winter's Tale* and *Hamlet*, with cross references to *King Lear* and other major plays. With all due reverence to Shakespeare it

must be said that a good deal of his word-fencing, so fashionable with the Elizabethans and often seeming so strained and affected to us, is not worth the monumental ingenuity the authoress has expended on it.

Mr. Day Lewis is an established poet, the only one of the four with inside experience. His main thesis, supported by a battery of quotations, is that the poet and scientist are kindred explorers of the unknown. Agreed, but why such solemnity about what is fairly obvious? His secondary analogy of the poet as angler, self-consciously dangling his bait in the depths and rejecting in cold blood nibble after nibble, is less sound. Great poetry never had to be fished for. Paradoxically, it is the poem that leaps out of the subconscious and grabs the poet by the nape of the neck. Not the other way round, which Mr. Day Lewis and the other cerebral poets he adduces in support seem to be so sure it is.

FROM FOUR COUNTRIES

PAUL SELVER

Further Papers on Dante, by Dorothy L. Sayers (Methuen, 25s.).

Reason and Energy, Studies in German Literature: by Michael Hamburger (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 30s.).

Poet in New York, by Federico Garcia Lorca. A new translation by Ben Belitt, introduction by Angel Del Rio (Thames and Hudson, 15s.).

Baudelaire: A Self-portrait. Selected letters, translated and edited with a running commentary by Lois Boe Hyslop and Francis E. Hyslop, jr. (Oxford University Press, 25s.).

'He was simply the most incomparable story-teller who ever set pen to paper.' This statement illuminates the manner in which Dr. Sayers approaches Dante. With Chestertonian breeziness she deals even with those aspects of the *Divine Comedy* which, when handled by the pundits, mystify the ordinary reader. Most of her eight papers here were originally addressed to audiences and now, in print, they provide painless reading. 'Dante's Virgil', 'Dante's Cosmos' (embodying a Landorian imaginary dialogue between Dante and Eddington) and 'Dante and Milton' are particularly impressive. I applaud Dr. Sayers also for quoting Virgil in English from the unduly neglected version by William Morris.

Michael Hamburger's volume carries me back to the starkness of the academic lecture-room. No breeziness this time. Even the blurb is Third-Programmesque. ('One outstanding characteristic of most modern German writers is that they create the world anew . . .') No wonder that Mr. Hamburger devotes 144 pages to Holderin, Novalis, and Heinrich von Kleist, and thirty-six pages to the weird works of Doctor Gottfried Benn. Nor is it surprising that on the subject of Georg Trakl's remarkable poetry he quotes Wittigenstein's comment: 'I don't understand it; but its *tone* delights me. It is the *tone* of pure genius'. This is a point of view which Mr. Hamburger seems to share.

But the cult of jabberwocky reaches a positive frenzy in Lorca's *Poet In New York*. Turning the pages at random, I am reminded of 'Beachcomber'

at his ripest: 'From the other side of the moon I pulled up a chicken-claw', 'Or we climb to the snowy divide with the choir of dead dahlias', 'And forgetting the little guffaws of the cotton, under chairs', 'Those who drink down the tears of dead girls in the bank-lobby'. The book is crammed with this kind of tipsy verbiage. There was a (perhaps legendary) translation of Hegel, the reader of which had to use the original as a crib. I attempted the method here, but without success. And neither the somewhat apologetic introduction, nor the portentous foreword of the translator could persuade me that I had failed to discern a masterpiece in subtle disguise.

Finally, a selection from the correspondence of Baudelaire, in smooth English, and with a biographical narrative linking the individual letters. The book thus forms a well-documented account of one of the most tragic lives in the history of literature.

A MASTER'S BOOK OF BALLADS

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, edited (five volumes) by Francis James Child (Folklore Press and Pageant Book Co. and Oxford University Press, £12 12s.).

This impeccably produced new edition of Professor Child's life-work is most welcome since earlier printings have become scarce and costly. It is a definitive masterpiece without which no library can pretend to a well-documented Poetry Section. It contains scrupulously-sifted versions of the three hundred and five traditional ballad stories together with invaluable indices, a glossary and many vocal scores of the musical airs. The scope of the bibliography is staggering: not only are the various English language versions of each ballad thoroughly explored; all the European, Asian, American, and every possible variant of the original story, are listed and compared in a clear and enthralling way which demonstrates, without pedantic mumbo-jumbo, the extraordinary learning, enthusiasm and patience of the editor, Francis James Child.

One can hardly survey such a work without wanting to know about the man who conceived and carried out such a prodigious task, and from G. L. Kittredge's biographical preface we can learn something of this great collector's life and character. How Child, a humble sailmaker's son from Boston, Massachusetts, equipped himself to enter Harvard (then a college of native excellence, but not of university standing); how he soon surpassed his fellows in all subjects, including mathematics; how he developed a brilliant command of other languages. From his early works on Spenser and Chaucer the tremendous project of the Ballads was born.

The special quality of the ballad is its objectivity. The drama of its theme and the *bite* in the telling must not be muzzled by the singer's own opinions. In this, it is more directly and truly of the people than are those first poetic wonderments concerning man's destiny, such as we find in the early 'Christian' poems and plays. And something more than scholarship is required to penetrate the corruptions to which oral literature is peculiarly susceptible – a freshness of mind and an ear attuned to the crystal spring of unselfconscious

expression before the increasing stream of creative imagination has become swollen by rhetoric and all the débris of civilization. Such a mind and ear were Francis Child's. A friend once said of him: 'He is the only man I know who really *thinks no evil*'.

It must have been this pure humanity which led him to pour the richness of his gifts into a faithful preservation of the brotherhood of the living word. How faithful, one may judge from any random example. Take 'The Twa Sisters': the tale of a girl drowned by a jealous sister, whose body and hair were fashioned into an instrument of musical vengeance. There are twenty-one English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh versions listed as authentic (among them Scott's 'Binnorie'); variants from Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Faroe, and Swedish folklore; Norse, Slovak, and even South African and Chinese parallels, with diversions, corruptions and changes all carefully noted and analysed.

There is more than mere romantic excitement in tracing the thread of this one song of many and its survival, borne by word of mouth alone, through centuries of invasion and conquest, by Celtic, Roman, Germanic, Viking and Saxon communities; through the Norman Conquest and the stormy Middle Ages; surviving even the new sophistication of the Renaissance until it was published as a broadsheet in 1656; on again through the Reformation, the licentious, satirical and industrial eighteenth century, Methodism and the competition of the hymn; to be kept alive and handed down in nursery and drawing-room until it reached the New World through a nineteenth-century Boston professor. And to-day we too can study it afresh, say it aloud, or be thrilled by its vitality triumphantly riding the radio waves.

Surely here is something basic which has managed to escape the scientists, and always will, since it cannot be expressed by an equation. *Vox populi vox pueri.*

THE PARADOX OF THE POET

KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

Three Elegies, by Jack Lindsay (Myriad Press, 1s.)
Rainer Maria Rilke; Creative Anguish of a Modern poet, by W. L. Graff (Princeton University Press and London Univ. Press, 48s.)

In Jack Lindsay's booklet, two of the elegies are on Dylan Thomas and Alexandr Fadayev, the third being in memory of 'Ann'. All three elegies contain authentic poetry which has a muscular and flexible handling of words. There is a good deal that is puzzling in the poet's attitude to Dylan Thomas, for he thinks of him as having been murdered, though if his death is to be conceived of as violent, one wonders whether it was not suicide rather than murder. Jack Lindsay writes 'You loved almost everyone except those who now praise you,' which seems manifestly untrue since the author himself is praising Dylan Thomas. It is further said of him 'Your face was innocent under a guileful mask of innocence'. The plain man is surely forgiven for feeling the poet to be a paradox who wears a guileful mask of innocence on top of a face of innocence. This booklet is the first to come from a new press which, however, will issue much more accomplished printing than this is.

Rilke's biographer, who is a former Professor of Germanic Languages at MacGill University, pays the subject of his book the immense compliment of indefatigable research and analysis, without ever becoming an idolator. He faces candidly, for example, Rilke's preoccupation with puppets and dolls which was such as to make him material for a psychiatrist; and yet the book has sufficient portrayal of that essential genius which makes understandable the worship bestowed on him by his more extravagant admirers.

Rilke was indeed a paradox: a male being with a feminine name; one who never earned a wage or a salary, and yet never starved; one whose sole function, in a world dominated by economic and technical skills, was that of being a lyrical poet.

His parents both wanted a daughter, and as he was born on 4th December, the Day of Holy Mary, Maria was included among his names. His mother brought him up as if he were a girl. Until he was five he wore long curls and feminine clothes. He played with dolls whose hair he combed. To his birthday parties, only girls were invited. During his second school-year he was absent over 200 times, owing to his mother's over-anxiety about his health. Throughout his life he met so many wise spinsters and so many utterly stupid wives as to induce the belief that all the Wise Virgins of the parable remained so, and all the foolish ones married.

MORE ABOUT BALLADRY

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The York Cycle of Mystery Plays, a complete version by J. S. Purvis (Society for the Propagation of the Christian Kingdom, 25s.).

English and Scottish Ballads, edited by Robert Graves (Heinemann, 9s. 6d.).

The Common Muse: Popular British Ballad Poetry (Chatto & Windus, 25s., or with Appendices, 63s.).

These three volumes are complementary to the understanding of the character of poetry as an art of the people. Drama until the sixteenth century was the province of the Church, with its presentation of mystery plays. From 1350 to 1572, on Corpus Christi day in York, at twelve stations round the city from dawn to dusk the guilds presented the creation, the life, and the passion of the Saviour. The manuscript of the forty-nine episodes has now been rendered into modern vernacular by Canon Purvis. The cycle is revealed as folk poetry of a high order.

Drama moved from the Church into the care of the secular organized theatre in the sixteenth century. With the coming of printing, ballads passed from the oral tradition of wandering minstrels into the commerce of miscellanies and broadsheets. For two centuries a golden age of balladry ensued, inspired by the publication of the great ballads of the past. Ballad-writing, however, was exploited by political pamphleteers and sensation-mongers and by the nineteenth century was travelling a low road.

Robert Graves has made a happy selection of forty-eight ballads out of

the wealth of the golden age. Many of the best known are included and some not so well known, but all of them exemplify the qualities of objective simplicity and powerful handling of crisis and climax that hall-marks the great ballad.

The Common Muse traces the divergence and decline of the street-ballad in nearly two hundred examples over the last four hundred years, and in appendices (included only in the Special Edition) a further forty-five of the most scurrilous and pornographic are added. Though the ballad lost its way, this collection demonstrates that its virility and pungency still commanded the popular ear. Poets can learn from it how to move nearer the centre from their detachment, albeit without bending too low.

A BOUNTIFUL LEGACY

GWYNETH ANDERSON

The Legacy, by Phyllis Vallance, with woodcut by Gertrude Hermes. (Villiers Publications, Holloway, London).

Phyllis Vallance, well known as an ardent worker for 'lost causes,' died young. She was born in 1892 and died in 1955, but it is clear that in vividness of experience and the vital energy needed for its expression, she always remained a young woman.

She had never published a volume of her poetry. That would have been our great loss, had not her daughters and some close friends, 'in loving remembrance,' collected a hundred short poems, written between 1920 and 1954. Many she may never have expected to see in print; many she might have improved. Yet perhaps, being a woman who ardently embraced life at all points rather than a self-dedicated artist, she herself might have been surprised at the poignancy and power in this little book.

> Let me only do what I must do
> Let me only feel what I must bear . . .

That was in 1920. (I seem to hear Emily Brontë!) But this message to her daughter was written in 1947:

> Blaze your own bright trail in the reaching void,
> Love, and be true and constant, and at the end,
> Find, on the explorer's lonely mountain top,
> That Earth's your friend.

The tragedy of Phyllis Vallance was that, in middle age, with failing health, she felt that her friend the Earth, consoler and upholder in her sharper agonies, was abandoning her. But it was, I think, she herself who was withdrawing. 'Be proud and glad, One can never get over love', she wrote in high heroism in 1946. The last poem in this beautifully arranged book, fittingly entitled 'The Strange Light', and written for her grandson, playing with whom she gave so much of her last strength, is given in full, as a slight tribute to a real poet and a sensitive, perceptive woman:

> When my life wavers, hardly acquiescent
> To Time's restricting hand upon my days,
> And future hopes of fine, adventurous ways
> Hang on the moon's horn, a diminished crescent.

With beauty's bitter passing, with no pride
  As tingling nerve and muscle slowly rust,
  I recognize the all-compelling 'must'
That lays the ardour of my life aside.

Oh, then miraculous, a halcyon sun
  Floods out my being, leaps my inmost heart,
  As though a new birth quickened there apart
And the true ichor in my veins did run –

Your swift unfolding, little four-year-old,
  Is alchemy of grey to brightest gold.

'WARMTH AND JOY'

NOTES BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD

(The inclusion of a new work in these notes does not preclude a subsequent review.)

Any book of verse which has been given a send-off by Roy Campbell calls for uncommon attention. *The Collected Poems of Francis Carey Slater* (Blackwood, 12s. 6d.) and *Toward the Sun*, by Charles Plumb (Parry Jackman, London, 10s. 6d.) include a word of blessing from him. Dr. Slater, wrote Roy Campbell in one of the prefaces, was 'the forerunner and pioneer of us all.' Furthermore, a poem entitled 'The Dead Eagle' is 'as great as anything yet written by a South African.' It is one of a hundred and fifty inclusions – a memorable volume. Charles Plumb's book is restricted to three lengthy poems, and Roy Campbell's preface this time is more personal. In spite of his inability to read Wordsworth, here confessed, and Plumb's Wordsworthian mind, Campbell declares without qualification: 'I have always loved Charles Plumb's poetry.'

From these two works (impressive partly because of their association) we turn to Jack Lindsay and a new enterprise which has started with his *Three Elegies* (Myriad Press, 1s.) and with which he is associated. Two of his three elegies are to Dylan Thomas and the Russian Fadayev, and the third is 'To Ann: the Return.' It is three years since we mourned the death of Ann Lindsay, and so beautiful is her husband's tribute that the *Times Literary Supplement* has proclaimed it 'the most moving poem' by him that the reviewer remembers to have seen.

Outpost Publications, a Press to which Howard Sergeant is linked at Dulwich, is in full spate just now. We congratulate him on the neat, tasteful and very slim booklets which have reached us (2s. 6d. each) – *Alms for Oblivion*, by David Scott Blackhall, *You, Neighbour God*, by I. M. Patterson, *May to Midsummer*, by Alan Shaw, *Moonrise*, by John Chappell, *The Truth of Being*, by Margaret A. Wraith, and *The Poet's Hour*, by Arnold Vincent Bowen, whose name is familiar to readers of *The Poetry Review*. All these booklets have distinction.

Out of the ordinary in another way is *Emu, Remember!* by Alfred W. Purdy, one of three booklets issued by the Villiers Press (the others are *The One-Eyed Gunner*, by Robert Beloof, and *Lost Diver*, by G. V. Downs). Mr. Purdy addresses the reader autobiographically, as follows: '... Education from institutions, nil; from approximately 10,000 books, considerably more. Military

career, checkered. Religion, show me. Marital status, almost. Disposition, cloudy and variable.' And so on. Two publications come from The Guild Press at York, now removed to Hull: *Sirena II,* a selection by members of University College and the University, Nottingham, 1928-1956 (Guild Press, 5s.), and another of the Guild Broadsheets, presenting Frances Porteous (6d.). Readers will be acquainted already with Miss Porteous's gentle, devout writings, and the six pieces included will not disappoint them. The most interesting contributions to the much livelier second *Sirena* are by V. de S. Pinto. The others are a mixture of cleverness, irreverence and, now and again, 'warmth' – to quote one of them – 'and joy.'

The attractiveness of a picture is often enhanced by its frame, but a poem does not depend on the print and general get-up. Iris Langley Carless and Silvia Tatham are poets in their own right:

> Dark-eyed, with branches of golden lemons aglow,
> And fair sweet flowers that scents and colours blend –

from *Collected Poems,* by Miss Tatham, and:

> Summer leapt scarlet in the buckwheat stem
> And in the mustard, yellow, strong and sweet –

from *Half Seen, Half Heard,* by Iris Langley Carless (6s.): these are delightful lines, and their promise is fulfilled in the happiest way. Miss Carless is more in the world of atom-bombs and violent purposes than Miss Tatham, although the titles of three of her poems are 'Old Friends', 'The Old Friend', and 'My Friends'. Anyway, Poetry Publications, Cambridge, have added two welcome volumes to their list.

From still another firm, the Mitre Press – and there are more to come – we have received *Selected Poems, 1956,* by Marjorie Hedley (2s. 6d.). Here is thought as well as feeling, but Mrs. Hedley, adventurous in her craftsmanship, takes risks and often overcomes them:

> Love is not a Phoenix. Its death is absolute
> No spirit rises from its funeral pyre.
> The breath of passion cannot stir
> The ashes to new life . . .

Such lines seldom record merely a statement of fact. Between 'Happiness' and 'Outside Prestatyn' this collection holds thirty-one admirably consistent poems. Admirably consistent is our description of *Eternal Crusade,* by 'Ariel' (Maclellan, 3s. 6d.), although the author's consistency will never be tested further, because she died a few months before her little book was published. Her real name was Adrian Arden, of concert-room, stage, and screen, and those who remember her or worked with her in several of Max Reinhardt's great stage productions – she toured with him all over Europe – will be glad to secure this collection of 'Ariel's' poems as a memento, especially as it includes her truly lovely portrait.

From the Linden Press comes *Poems of Truth,* by Michael Dillon (6s. 6d.). Here, as the title may indicate, is a Higher Philosopher, and we have nothing but praise for an author who in face of a score of difficulties of his own making, steps out and solves them in by no means unworthy verse while at the same time he puzzles and even confuses the reader. Perhaps the best of the poems is 'Wonder' –

Still pass we by the small, white flower
And wonder not at beauty, seeds or scent;
Still lust to build a lofty tower . . .

John Fergusson's play, *The Trial* – set in 'the courts of heaven' – is now in print (Epworth Press, 1s. 6d.). The fourth series of Father O'Daly's tenderly-written reflections, *As I Sit Here*, is published by the Assisi Press, Dublin (1s.). From Hong Kong comes *Between Two Worlds*, translated from the Chinese by Wong Man (Student Book Store, 4.80 dollars). And from America – *Nettle and Laughter* (Fine Editions Press, unpriced) by Royal Murdoch; *Beside the Cabin*, by Stellanova Osborn (Northwoods Press, Michigan); and *Norwegian Year*, by Eleanor Stevens Kleinschmidt (Bruce Humphries, Boston, 3 dollars). Keynote of this last-named sheaf from an autumn harvest: 'As one in love (with Norway) I am heart-smitten.' True poetry here.

The Assisi Press of Dublin, already named in these notes, has also published *The Chastening*, by Denys Blakelock (5s.). The quotation made above about 'warmth and joy' could certainly apply to Mr. Blakelock's verse. His devoutness illumines his Catholic religion; once an actor, he is broad and gracious in observation: he mourns 'Two Deaths', of Walter de la Mare and a young Norwegian drama student, in this way: 'One that was famed, the other yet unknown, one that held out the budding rose, the other bloom upon bloom full-blown.' Michael Baldwin's *Voyage from Spring* (Routledge, 10s. 6d.) might profitably be read alongside. Here is an English poet, a modern one at that.

Mr. Stockwell has sent a varied half-dozen new works. Varied in production, but not strikingly so in quality: *The Wind Blows Over*, by Florence Robertson Cameron (6s.) and *Pearls*, by A. Sedat H. Torel (5s.); *Poems that Bridge the Years*, by Elsie M. Hunter (2s. 6d.) and *Ventures in Verse*, by Jane Atkinson (1s. 6d.); and two at a high price even in these days – *God the Mathematician*, by Alan Dane, and *Poems of Home and East Africa*, by Gladys Toulmin, 9s. 6d. each.

Two publications have a Canadian imprint. One is *The Testament of Cresseid*, a new version of an old story by Fred Cogswell (Ryerson Press Toronto, 1 dollar) – a very creditable achievement – and *Nova Scotia Book of Verse* (Nova Scotia Centre, Poetry Society), the fourth of a series of 'chapbooks' containing a selection of the work done by contributors in all parts of Canada. Three hundred and eighty-five original poems are submitted, and a hundred of them included. The three judges are to be congratulated on an excellent choice: and it is very fitting that the production should include a richly-coloured cover-design of the Nova Scotia tartan. After all, it must not be forgotten that 'New Scotland' was granted the Royal Charter in the year 1621.

Apart from a new edition of *The Oxford Book of French Verse* (Clarendon Press, 21s.), the rest of our books received are prose-works, so numerous that we can hardly do more than tabulate them in this page of 'briefs'. A charmingly-presented study of *Chekhov*, by W. H. Bruford, and another of *Hofmannsthal*, the German librettist, by Hanns Hammelmann, are published in the series of studies in modern European literature and thought (Bowes and Bowes, 7s. 6d. each). A second instalment of John Alexander Chapman's *Critical Papers* (Holywell Press, Oxford, 6s.) includes essays on Keats, Wordsworth and Hopkins. Dallas Kenmare has edited and presented Browning's

love-letters – *The Browning Love-Story* (Peter Owen, 21s.), and Philip M. Martin's *Mastery and Mercy* is a study of two religious works in verse – Hopkins's 'Deutschland' and Eliot's 'Ash Wednesday' (Oxford University Press, 15s.).

From the same publishing house has appeared an anthology of *Spoken Verse and Prose, Part I,* with Geoffrey Johnson, John Byrne and Christabel Burniston sharing the editorial duties. Another anthology has been compiled by W. G. Bebbington – *Introducing Modern Poetry* (Faber, 9s. 6d.), though for whom the 'introduction' is intended cannot be gathered with any confidence from the opening line of the first piece in the collection – 'They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchen.' However, the selected authors include not only T. S. Eliot, but Edith Sitwell, Paul Dehn, and Edwin Muir. Four books bear the Cambridge University imprint; *The Poet's Craft*, by A. F. Scott, based on the study of authors' corrected manuscripts photographed, revisions and transpositions of prose into verse – an excellent scheme (18s.); *Punctuation*, by G. V. Carey (3s. 6d.); *Thought, Life, and Time* as reflected in Science and Poetry, by H. G. Wood (4s. 6d.); and a Rede lecture on *Matthew Prior* by R. W. Ketton-Cremer. In the *Contemporary Review* for May is a fascinating essay on 'William Blake the Visionary' by Dr. J. B. Price (3s. 6d.), and the prolific James Reeves is the author of *The Modern Poet's World* (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.). Among his poets he has thought fit to include E. E. Cummings ('what if a much of a which of a wind'), and Stephen Spender's 'My Parents Kept me from Children who were Rough.' There's no accounting.

AFTER VISITING A MUSEUM

ROBERTA SHUTTLEWORTH

Returning from a tryst kept with the past –
Saluting Mercury, Achilles, Venus,
Midas and the rest, in dream-conceptions
And historic busts – a day of catalogues,
Silences and occasional recognitions –
A day of wandering and wondering what was what
And which was which, and why we dared to think
We knew if dead or living were the more alive,

I caught the six-fifteen from Waterloo
And settled in a corner-seat, watching
Descendants of those statues board the train.
Mercury came first, clear-cut and young,
In air-force ether-blue, his wings no longer
On his head, but breast. Midas followed,
Gold-chained and ringed, with quick discerning eye.
And last came Venus holding Cupid's hand,
A Cupid with sun-shot curls and no arrow
But just the perfect marksman's smile
And the mischief of a conquest by a look –
How did the ancients know, so much, so long ago?

Greenwood Prize Poem . . .*

THE RETURN

JOSEPH TUSIANI

My cradle-land, who suffered? I did not,
Nor did I ever miss your wonderbreeze,
If my sad eyes can see you, lucent still,
And still maternal. Over savage seas
My fear alone has groped; through winds, and weird
Valleys, and moonless paths only my thought
Has ventured; but the soul,
Blood through the veins, has passed through your roots wild
Eternally, and the man
Has not outgrown the child.

The child, my land, was here; then here am I,
Now that, virgin and vast, on you the sky
Bends – its blue reachable, tangible – and
Calls you alone its land;
And, back from its bright leaps of white, the wave
Sings at your shores in happiness of spume.
Here I remained, stretched on this grass in bloom –
My trepid ear intent
To capture, through the beat of my own blood,
The budding of the leaf and the impending
Avalanche of the thunder. Here I stood,
And when on stone and thicket the thick drops
Of the rain rushed, I saw your face all new
With humid wonder, in your sacred dens
Hiding my terror till the sun came out.

The sun, the sun is here, part of you, part
Of me, so low that we can almost touch
Its fulgence, tender and melodious.
Look, on that rock the goat
Is crunching purple grass – it seems to us
It's chewing sun-rays; and on this steep hill,
Listening to the fresh words of the sea,
A little, silent shepherd near his flock
Is glad to balance on his open hand
A sky of gold. And all about are bells,
And soon is evening – ah, this tranquil thing
That films our eyes with tears
And makes us gaze at you, my mountain land.

When night is grey, and the cricket and I
Are the only living spirits
Beneath a sky now ebbing then reflooding
To the sleepy and melancholy eye,
An old man sings a tale of life; nearby,
The little shepherd listens. The sea glistens,
As if attentive, too, till the song trembles,
And till on the same rock
A white head and a million curls are still
In the long night that is restless with stars.

Now silence floods the deep abysses, and
The dark, the astonished heart that is waking.
And are you, land of love,
Still watching over my thought that is aching?
I know that, under your stone-rigid eyelid,
Yesterday's tears are warm,
And in your heart of forest breathes the hope
That may your trees be safe from future storm,
And flights and pastures be
Still for your birds and sheep, and all your sons
Be spared another morning of despair.
Mother, I sing to you your praises still,
And you hearken, O hearken my night song
As once my hymn of May,
Gushing from heart to heart, to you from me.

I have come back from a far-away sea;
But who can now annul a past, and speed
Back to its ancient seed

*For the Adjudication and Report see April–June issue, 1957.

A bud full-burgeoned? In my days, this plant
Was frail, so frail I could with my small hand
Caress it, shaking all its dew for me;
Now it is more than a tree,
And my strong grip can touch but its rough rind
And hurt its boughs no more. But in this trunk,
My land, is still the sap
Of your immaculate life.

Immaculate I feel, though thoughts of the tomb
Have changed me. Different lands I have seen,
And different laws and lores,
And I have learned to sleep my nights without
Your skies; not to be late, the following dawn;
To trudge toward the same sunset, weak, alone.
But, swift and free, your winds were running here,
And in these furrows, in these golden spears,
The hare was leaping and the violet
Was smiling at its frolics in the moon.

You do not know the world under the sun,
Land that I love. Now which
Of us knows more, or which is happier,
I cannot tell: I who have heard the cry
Of many peoples, seen despair and fright,
Or you who, past the thunder and the rain,
Still keep at dawn the innocence of night.
I do not know, for knowing evil is
Perhaps to shun a little what is good.
But certainly the bud
Can spring and live without us, though we all
Are sad with not one bud. Yours is all bliss,
And yours all happiness if, once returned
To your sweet breast, immune to change or hate,
One suffers not to be still a proud fragment
Of you, like this shoot sleeping blessedly,
Like those two shepherds clinging through one sleep
To the same moss and fate.

My land, do you still hear me? To this infinite
Silence – to me it seems eternal, infinite –
The cricket cries its ancient message, and
The snake glides out to the moonlight and, there,
The frog repeats its old lament to the fresh
Unbelief of the air,
While on the winding road the carter's song
Sings of two tresses softer than the grass.
In such a tranquil world, in such sweet peace
That knows no wrong, am I
The only living thing whose breath is a sigh,
Whose word a language of distress, a moan?

I know you hear me still. The wind has gnawed
And wrecked your blocks into the sea, and seven
Winters have dried your fields,
Burying your wreaths under their snows, and seven
Aprils have wounded your heart with great joy,
And you have suffered, land
Of my father and mother, from the hand
Of man and hostile heaven.
Yet you are good, and all your silence sounds
More than song to the flower
That, sprung out of God's Mind Eternal, here,
In a short while, will burgeon on this ground
Of wonder, and to me who, come through drear
Gestations and through thousand years of pain,
Am here reborn, and sing
To the air of the mountain and the plain:
'O mystery! O glory! I was born
Where to be born is beauty and is love.'

Of love the flower is born,
And each bud wants the morning, and each infant,

Life. Down there the sail, unfurled,
Longs for the wind, and the dew
Yearns for a ray to be
The most beautiful pearl in the world.
I feel the tree-tops thrilling to the dawn,
And I guess this new breath
Of wild roses is pollen, hymn on the tallest
Summit, on all the peaks. I know you well,
Shudder of thousand trees, tremulous song
Of timid harp before the call of death,
Now when each dream is turning into gleam
Of color, and each color seems a heart
Of man. Come soon to the feast manifold
Of this hill, of this wood
Clothing itself in white and gold!

Ah, too late, it's too late:
What was gold is now crocus, and the sheen
That was morning is life
To be felt, no more seen.
Into this sea
Of loveliness the night is lost and gained,
And all my cares are drowned.

*

THE ROSE

M. E. MASON

Men sang her praises through the centuries,
Extolled her Perfume, made comparison
With blush of Maiden cheeks,
Crowded her Courts, and knightly Homage paid
In Vows and sighs –
The fairest Flower of the wide world over,
His gift, the lovely Rose for his deare Ladye
From her lover.

And to the Festival, as to the grave,
Her rarest blooms they gave,
And laid them on the altars of the Saints.

In the dim Ages – under southern skies
A light that broke upon the troubled world,
A Poet's dream –
The Vision of the Rose
Of Dante's Paradise.

In humble Plot, and spacious Pleasaunces
She reigns beyond compare,
Too soon, her swift Perfections flown,
Still leave their Fragrances
Upon a wintering air.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE: HIS REPUTATION TO-DAY

(for N. Chatterji*)

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

Well do I remember the thrill of inspiration I received on my first reading of *Gitanjali*, and afterwards from *The Gardener* and other books by Rabindranath Tagore. He seemed to me then a true and universal poet, in the major sense of being a prophet, a piercer of the veils that confuse human perception and spiritual understanding. His work is full of profound values of thought and revelation, so that single sentences stand out as signposts, *e.g.* 'Consciously or unconsciously we have in our life this feeling of Truth which is ever larger than its appearance; for our life is facing the infinite, and it is in movement' (*Sadhana*); and 'I shrink to give up my life, and thus do not plunge into the great waters of life.' (*Gitanjali*).

After the first furore of excited interest in Tagore's work – due, in its popular manifestations, to the picturesque personality of the poet and to the award of the Nobel Prize; and, among western intellectuals and poets, to a desire to give generous recognition to a new voice out of the East – the inevitable decline set in, but not, I think, more markedly than in the case of such contemporaries as Thomas Hardy, Yeats, A. E. and the best of the 'Georgian' poets. Even to explain this by the emergence of T. S. Eliot as the voice of the bewildered and despairing English-speaking intelligentsia is to ignore the general tendency of the reading public to neglect or demolish reputations which formerly seemed unassailable and secure: the instances of Tennyson, Browning and Rossetti spring to mind.

Tagore's biographer, the late Edward Thompson, was too near the Wasteland phenomenon when he wrote, 'He won't get justice now; nothing could get him justice'; there are many signs, notably in the deepening spiritual content of verse to-day, of the Indian poet's permeating influence. All in all, I am convinced that Tagore's reputation in the English-speaking world will come unscathed through the most searching reassessments. As A. E. said, 'The immortal in us has memory of all its wisdom.'

* Author of a socio-literary study of Tagore, written in Bengali, to be published in India next year.

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ORIOLE COMPETITION – POEM ON TRAVEL

Sir John Squire has adjudicated the latest Oriole Prize Competition for a poem on Travel. His report will appear in the next issue.

POETRY PROGRESS

THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Forty-eighth Annual General Business Meeting of The Poetry Society was held at 33 Portman Square on the 22nd May, 1957.

The President, Mr. Thomas Moult, opened the proceedings with a welcome to the Members, and conveyed apologies for absence from Mrs. Van den Bergh; Mrs. Coker; Wilton Cole Esq; Miss Mary Giles; Miss Margaret Rawlings; Mrs. K. V. Richardson and Miss Odette Tchernine.

The Honorary Treasurer submitted the Balance Sheet and the Accounts for 1956, together with the report of the General Council, which stated that after making all the necessary provisions there was a net surplus for the year which amounted to £807 3s. 10d. The balance of the Accumulated Fund at the 31st December, 1956, was £3,770 10s. 0d.

Moving the adoption of the Accounts he said that the situation could be regarded with restrained optimism. The Accumulated Fund had been increased by £1,516 over the last four years. The popularity of the Verse Speaking Examinations was widespread and increasing. The income from Special Meetings showed a welcome increase. The Society was deeply grateful for a splendid legacy from the Estate of Miss M. L. Lloyd.

Membership was still the greatest challenge, and he sometimes wondered whether it was less valued because it was so cheap, having remained unaltered for many years. He stated that each annual pound of subscription was being used to the value of £6 in the cause of Poetry, and asked if there was anywhere in the world to-day a wiser investment in the cultural life of the community.

In conclusion Mr. Graddon paid tribute to the Staff, and acknowledged his special indebtedness to Messrs. Godwin & Taylor, the Society's Auditors.

Seconding the adoption of the Accounts, Mr. A. V. Burbury said he would like to couple John Graddon's name with that of Thomas Weston Ramsey. The Hon. Treasurer was a modest and unassuming man and deserved the thanks of the Society.

Mr. Kennedy Williamson proposed and Mr. Charles Doran seconded the appointment of Messrs. Godwin & Taylor as Auditors for the ensuing year at a remuneration of £100.

A SATISFYING YEAR

The President began his address with the announcement that Mr. Robert Frost would come to Portman Square on Tuesday, the 11th June, at 5 p.m.

He went on to congratulate his fellow-members and fellow-workers on the increasing interest that is being shown in the Society's progress. An example of this was the reassurance by Messrs. W. H. Smith, the famous newsagents, that they recognized officially the outstanding cultural and artistic value of *The Poetry Review*, 'and we would not think of withdrawing it from our news-stands.' They have greatly reduced, it appears, the number of periodicals with which they deal.

The satisfaction which the year's work of the Society has given to all who have had a part in it is overshadowed by the losses, through death, to poetry since the last Annual Meeting; Walter de la Mare, A. E. Coppard, Lady Dorothy Wellesley, Gilbert Murray (one of our Covenantors), Viola Meynell and Roy Campbell. All have been commemorated by tributes in *The Poetry Review* or through memorial readings on our Friday evenings at 33 Portman Square. To these losses we have to add that of our well-loved colleague Tom Foley, and, away in New York, Albert Ralph Korn, 'generous giver of prizes,' has died. The President expressed his appreciation of Lord Dunsany's wish, when Walter de la Mare died, to contribute to *The Poetry Review* and to our Memorial Evening the poem he had specially written for and read at the Service in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Turning to *The Poetry Review* itself, the President expressed his conviction that there is nothing to compare in quality, sustained over five years, with the book-reviews and general high standard of our quarterly numbers. Their authors, members of The Editorial Board, in addition Paul Selver and Robert Armstrong – always one of our most valued *all-rounders* – and, of course, Roy Campbell for some years, have been not only catholic enough to welcome in print good work wherever it may be found, but they have been *professional* in every legitimate sense of the word, although doing a labour of love. 'Where, in any of the arts', asked the President, 'is there to be found, either here or abroad, an equivalent institution so consistent in its dignity and integrity: a living, active, enthusiastic organization; attractive in its practical working and its selfless idealism.'

Turning to the Society's work he continued: 'We owe a great deal to the Hon. Treasurer for the re-establishment of our organization, not only in good repute and goodwill but in a financial sense. He has had vision, foreseeing the rich possibilities of what some have thought of, and may still think of, as a minor activity of the Society – that which concerns the younger generation. He has been loyally supported by the secretarial staff at headquarters and our team of examiners up and down the country. Inspired by him and Mrs. Graddon, they have shared in the building-up of an educational system in verse-speaking which, applied all over Great Britain, is unrivalled, unique.

"THE VOICE OF YOUTH"

'And that isn't all. *The Voice of Youth*, our Associate quarterly, is firmly established, with an increasing circulation. I explained a year ago why we changed the title from the word "Junior." Courageous as always, Mr. Graddon has undertaken a splendid adventure, the preparation of a Poetry Anthology for the use of examiners and young readers, which, after a tremendous, year-long labour, will be published in late summer or early autumn.'

The President then emphasized that the facts and figures in the Report and Balance Sheet reveal little or nothing of the labour, day after day and sometimes night after night all the year round, pursued by just a few true lovers of Poetry who have determined that, whatever the younger generation may encounter in the outside world, here, through The Poetry Society, they will learn that there are such things in the life around us as Loving-kindness, Heroism, Sacrifice, and Devotion to Goodness and Beauty . . .

'The admirable thing about the Labourers in our Vineyard is their willingness and capacity to do more jobs than one whether on behalf of the young people or their elders.' Many names were given and accompanied by the President's thanks, especially those of Mrs. K. V. Richardson, Mrs. V. Adamson, Mr. C. Doran, Miss Mary Giles, and Miss Pamela Corsie of the secretarial staff who, incidentally, since the last Annual Meeting has become a Gold Medallist in Poetry Speaking. A sympathetic reference was made to the personal troubles, such as illness and bereavement, of some of the Society's hardest workers. 'We who are colleagues united in the love of Poetry have become one family in the best sense. It is fitting that we should share our anxieties and griefs as well as our rejoicings. Remember what William Morris wrote: "Fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death: forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven, and lack of fellowship is hell: and the deeds that ye do upon the earth it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them".'

In closing, the President likened The Poetry Society to a sturdy tree – an oak, if we think of one that has withstood the storm and stress of the years. 'We do not see the strong, immovable tree-trunk growing. It appears to stand still and steadfast: only the growth of the branches is apparent. To one or another of those branches is given the main nourishment that makes it flourish and reach out, rich and ever richer in leaf and blossom. So it is with The Poetry Society. In some ways we seem

to be standing still, but we are not. Our best energies, their nourishment, are used for a particular time in a particular direction, the one which we regard as temporarily the most vitally important. At this moment the most flourishing branch of our sturdy tree is a fact – with figures – to inspire us. A few years ago six thousand young people were registered: to-day there are fourteen thousand. But we are not content to rest on our laurels – or should I say our oak leaves? *The battles for Beauty are never finally won.*'

The election of the General Council followed the President's speech. Fourteen members were elected to serve for the ensuing year. Their names are printed inside the front cover of each number.

Finally, on the advice of the President, it was decided, after discussion, that in future the time of the Annual General Meeting should be changed from the afternoon to 6 p.m. on any day of the week except Friday or Saturday.

New Serial Feature . . .

FORGOTTEN VERSE

Everybody, they say, has it in him, or her, to write at least one novel. Can the same be said about poetry? Maybe not, but as there are quite a lot of people in literary history who have written one worthy poem, the Editorial Board have been searching for evidence of it among the books and periodicals of the past century and even further back. Each number of *The Poetry Review* in the immediate future will include at least one of these, and we begin with an example taken from *The London Magazine,* July, 1823:

SONNET

(By a Person who never could write one)

Sonnets are things I never yet could write
And yet can give no reason. Why the deuce!
Should not I – such a *Genius* – write a spruce
Neat, pretty, little, tender sonnet? Try't.
Well, how shall I begin? Hem! – Now for a flight!
'O, silver-shifted Maid! bright Luna' – Truce,
Good pen! with this; sure every scribbling wight
Writes sonnets *at* the Moon: I'll no excuse –
Come, try another. Scritch-scratch – Pah! you're making
Truly, a pretty business of it, scrawling,
Blotting, and Oh's! and Ah's! and zig-zag drawling
Over my beautiful gilt sheet. If the King
Gave me his crown, I could not do't. Tut! man –
Well, here goes! – Now! – A . . . *Dam'me if I can*!

CAN WE HELP YOU?

The answer is Yes to anyone who is anxious for the best advice about his or her work. The Poetry Society established a CRITICAL SERVICE some years ago, and writers are invited to make use of it.

Members may submit two poems for criticism and help, for a minimum fee of 5s. The charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. Non-members 5s. for each poem.

COMPETITIONS FOR EVERYBODY – READERS AS WELL AS POETS

I – *Treasure Hunt continued . . .*

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT COMPETITION
ONE HUNDRED POUNDS IN PRIZES

The Poetry Society has pleasure in presenting the third instalment of our new *Competition for Poets, Non-Poets, and Readers of Poetry.* We offer – another record figure –

ONE HUNDRED POUNDS IN PRIZES

No prize will exceed FIFTY POUNDS, and none less thanTEN POUNDS.

But the would-be winner will be well-advised to join The Poetry Society, because the Competition will continue for further issues, and a set of coupons clipped from each of the numbers of *The Poetry Review* in which an instalment appears, must accompany the entry at the conclusion of the Contest. For details see the pages at the end of this number, where a coupon will also be found.

This is a unique Competition: a sequence compiled by 'Palgrave Q. Dobree' entirely of HIDDEN VERSES FROM KNOWN POEMS. All verses are authentic quotations, mostly taken from the middle or near-middle of poems, but several inclusions are taken from poems so short that they may belong to a poem's opening or its close. At least one quotation, indeed, is itself a complete poem. This is intended to make the search rather less arduous for some of our readers. Will competitors please take heed of this additional note, and also remember our hint that 'Palgrave Q. Dobree' took a few verses from isolated places and did not wholly refrain from 'jests'?

For the guidance of entrants here is an example of the method: the opening lines (in April-June issue) are to be found in 'Go, My Flock,' the ninth song in 'Astrophel and Stella,' by Sir Philip Sidney (1554–86).

We invite readers everywhere to trace the source of as many verses as possible. The winners will be those who give the largest correct number of sources. For other particulars see previous numbers.

The Competition will extend over further issues. Competitors must retain their lists of sources until the serialization is concluded. Instructions for submitting them will then be published, and, as the Competition is world-wide, ample time allowed for the mailing of entries. Meanwhile, make a note of each source along with the number. Each hidden verse is numbered alongside. The third instalment follows on page 245.

II—*A New Award . . .*

PETRARCHAN SONNET CONTEST

Poets who do not shrink from submitting to the discipline of the strict sonnet will welcome our new competition. It follows the famous sonnet contests sponsored by Lord Alfred Douglas and Howard Parsons. Their deaths left a gap, but now, through the generosity of Mrs. Robert Martin, we are able to offer prizes of

THREE POUNDS AND TWO POUNDS

for a Petrarchan Sonnet.

The competition is open to poets of all ages. Entries must be addressed 'Sonnet Competition', 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. The full name and address of the author must be typed in the top left-hand corner of the manuscript and *a coupon must be attached, clipped from the end-pages of this or our next issue.* The closing date is 30th January, 1958.

The Petrarchan Sonnet: Crosland, an accepted authority, stipulates that it must consist of fourteen decasyllabic lines, rhymed in two systems, (a) the octet or first eight lines, in which the first, fourth, fifth and eighth lines must rhyme together, and the second, third, sixth and seventh must rhyme together: and (b) the sestet may be on two rhymes or three, the first, third and fifth lines must rhyme together, and the second, fourth and sixth – or, the only alternative, the first, second and third with the fourth, fifth and sixth. Words ending in 'ty', 'ly', and 'cry', and any such overworked rhymes as 'see', 'me', 'be', and 'day', 'may', and 'play' must not be used: nor must the sestet contain a rhymed couplet or couplets, or end with a rhymed couplet. See also Herbert Palmer on 'The Sonnet,' page 215.

III – *A Famous Annual*

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITION FOR 1957–8

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of

TWENTY POUNDS

as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed 'The Greenwood Prize', 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. **Also a Coupon must be attached, clipped from the end page of this issue.** If a *nom de plume* is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date is 31st August, 1958.

IV – *Members and Subscribers only*

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION 34

The above competition continues as before with the

TOTAL ENTRANCE FEES AS PRIZE MONEY

which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired (See Rule 3).
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed 'Premium Competition', *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize money will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for this Premium Competition will be 1st November, 1957.

LATEST PRIZE REPORTS AND AWARDS

THE MENDIP PRIZE AWARDS NUMBER THREE

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

The entries were disappointing in number, and, except for those by two women, in quality also. Most competitors lacked understanding of metrics and technical discipline; some vainly hoped that storming along with compound epithets would somehow get their emotion and meaning across. Carmela Moya showed a fine sense of words and should go far. But for an occasional lapse, such as her non-rhyme *hills-stilled*, the standard of craftsmanship she set herself was high. The prize is awarded to Pamela Melnikoff, 12 Windsor Avenue, Edgware, Middlesex, for 'The Orchard.' Her theme and her diction in places (e.g., the overworked 'golden') were actually not as fresh as Miss Moya's, but in unity of conception and achievement her poem was considerably superior.

THE ORCHARD

PAMELA MELNIKOFF

A golden orchard and a golden sky,
Transient music fading in the air –
Unwilling, as all beauty is, to die,
And gilded foliage crumbling everywhere.
The year grows wistful, and will soon grow old . . .
Yet Autumn hours are lingering and sweet,
And golden gleams the apple that has rolled
Through burnished grass to lie between my feet.

So Eden must have looked in olden time;
And I, a modern, disenchanted Eve
Reared in a later and less gentle clime,
Walk where the leaves are bright, and half believe
That God will look between the fiery boughs
To bless this orchard with His ancient peace,
Teach man new wisdom, while the serpents drowse,
And grant us Eden for a second lease.

What have we done with this great gift of ours –
The deadly fruit filched from the golden tree?
True, we have learned to poison summer flowers
And blast the hope of man's posterity;
And we can pull a thousand cities down
And kill ten thousand children at a thrust,
Quench the bright sun, and burn the laurel crown,
And bury beauty in eternal dust.

'O let us live!' And what avails that cry?

Yet for one sunset I shall stop my ears
Against the living world of dreadful fears.
A golden orchard and a golden sky
Are all the world I know . . . and I believe
That this is Eden still, and I am Eve.

PREMIUM COMPETITION REPORT 32

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Many entries had much to convey but used an unsuitable pattern as the vehicle. Others while selecting an appropriate form had not the content to sustain it. A select few however married form to matter superbly. Of these, three poems were further hallmarked by that arresting individuality of utterance we call style; 'Nightfall' by May Thomas, a moving poem of Africa, 'Fade, Form' by Celia Randall, a taut distillation of a profound truth, and 'To My Grandfather' by Carmela Moya. To this last poem I award the prize. It recreates with perception and imagination a character that lives and speaks.

Hard on the heels of the leading trio came S. F. Smith, Rita Spurr, H. C. Morris. Betty Parvin and Mary Cunningham.

TO MY GRANDFATHER

CARMELA MOYA

O you who sailed the blind bard's wine-dark sea
To realms of ancient wonder, man of God
Who loved clear Sappho of the burning blood
With grave and holy love, not in despair
Have I returned to seek you – vain all tears –
But in delight of things remembered, years
When you and I together breathless trod
The ways of Parnassus from some arm-chair;
I come to seek you in the little things and old.

I greet you in each touch of pallid gold
As Autumn roses give themselves to night
And breathe their souls out to the harvest moon;
Within this pool pierced through with arctic light
– The seven stars and Orion upside down –
'See, child, the King of heaven has lost His crown
Within the stillness of the village pond!'
I come to seek you in the little things and old,
I greet you in each miracle made new –

In each frondescent miracle of Spring,
Earth palpitating as a warm ecstatic bird,

In flaming hedgerows singing of the Word
– Who saw the Tree in every leaf that grew –
In purple hills of Pan, primeval sun,
That inner we transmuted, we the Life
To form an ageless, universal One.
I see you in the little things, the old,
Mute-mouthed in wonder, and forever young
Nodding at Horace over rum-laced tea,
Treading the white paths of simplicity,
Humming as you wend your way from Stepney
To the Parthenon.

*

HIDDEN VERSES III

WARRIORS AND PATRIOTISM

62. Before, she like some shepherdess did show,
Who sat to bathe her by a river's side;
Not answering to her fame, but rude and low,
Nor taught the beauteous arts of modern pride.
63. To thee belongs the rural reign;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine;
All thine shall be the subject main,
And every shore it circles thine!
64. The lists are set in Heaven to-day,
The bright pavilions shine;
Fair hangs thy shield, and none gainsay;
The trumpets sound in sign That she is thine.
65. Oh, fairer than the bugle-call,
Its walls of jasper shine!
And Joshua's sword is on the wall
With space beside for mine.
Get up, get up, my hardy sons,
From this time forth we are
No longer men, but pikes and guns
In God's advancing war.
66. They promised me a bed so rich
And a queen to be my bride,
And I have gotten a narrow ditch
And a stake to pierce my side.
I shall dress me all in silk and scarlet
And the hangman shall have my ring,
For though I be hanged like a low-born varlet
They shall know I was once a king.
67. For this I have heard in my heart, that a man shall scatter not hoard,
Shall do the deed of to-day, nor take thought of to-morrow's teen,
Shall not bargain or huxter with God; or was it a jest of Christ's
And is this my sin before men, to have taken Him at His word?

68. Ah! Freedom is a noble thing!
Freedom makes man to have liking;
Freedom all solace to man gives;
He lives at ease that freely lives!

69. Alfred shall smile, and make his harp rejoice;
The Norman William, and the learned Clerk,
And Lion Heart, and black-brow'd Edward, with
His loyal queen, shall rise and welcome us!

70. Ye that have escaped the edge of the sword,
Go away, stand not still:
Remember the Lord afar off,
And let Jerusalem come into your mind.

71. Too late for song! Who henceforth sings,
Must fledge his heavenly flight with more
Song-worthy and heroic things
Than hasty home-destroying war.

72. God bless the King! – I mean the Faith's Defender!
God bless (no harm in blessing) the Pretender!
But who Pretender is, or, who is King,
God bless us all! – that's quite another thing.

73. The storm increases: 'tis no sunner shower
Foster'd in the moist breast of March or April
Or such as parchèd Summer cools his lips with;
Heaven's windows are flung wide; the inmost deeps
Call in hoarse greeting one upon another;
On comes the flood in all its foaming horrors,
And where's the dike shall stop it?

74. For I am bound to other marts
Where meagre are Love's doles,
And men lay by their broken hearts,
But not their broken souls.

75. With the great gale we journey
That breathes from gardens thinned,
Borne in the drift of blossoms
Whose petals throng the wind.

76. Sweet shall resound the curlew's wail,
New sails come sweeping up the sea,
But all the ships that ever sail
Will bring no comfort home to me.

77. My root was spread out by the waters,
And the dew lay all night upon my branch.
My glory was fresh in me,
And my bow was renewed in my hand.

POETS ON POETS

78. Here came Keats
Chaunting of autumnal sweets;
Through this city of old haunts,
Murmuring immortal chaunts.

Now Ready . . .

The Poetry Society's Verse-Speaking Anthology 1957

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79. Yes! the outside was rugged. But test him within
You found he had nought of the bear but the skin.
And for bottom and base to his 'unfractuosity'
A fund of fine feeling, good taste, generosity.
80. Keats, on his lips the eternal rose of youth,
Doth in the name of Beauty that is Truth
A kinsman's love beseech.
81. And not to you whose heart went anywhere
Her sorrow's holy heritage belongs!
You could have made of any other air
The little careful mouthfuls of your songs.
82. The tin-can politics of Rudyard
Rust in some Tooting brick and mudyard;
While, through the sacred brushwood rippling,
Glimmers the faun the gods call Kipling.
83. No room for mourning: he's gone out
Into the noisy glen, or stands between the stones
Of the gaunt ridge, or you'll hear his shout
Rolling among the screes, he being a boy again.
84. But not to one in this benighted age
Is that diviner inspiration giv'n,
That burns in Shakespeare's or in Milton's page
The pomp and prodigality of Heav'n.
85. Even as we see the fairest works of men
Awhile neglected, and the makers die;
But Truth comes weeping to their graves, and then
Their fames, victoriously mounting high
Do battle with the regnant names of eld. (*To be continued*)

'DEAR EDITORS – '

(The opinions expressed in the following Letters from Readers are not necessarily those of *The Poetry Review*.)

ROY CAMPBELL

'Reverence for Life.' Excellent, but then follows a tribute to a man who delighted in sticking bulls. There seems to be some inconsistency here, or have I missed the point of 'Reverence for Life'? F. W. BURTON

Although I am an admirer of the late Roy Campbell's work, I wish to protest against two of his dicta. He wrote: 'Any man may become a poet,' and 'few poets become men.' And what is my objection? Simply this: neither proposition is true.

Concrete examples are worth pages of reasoning. Both Napoleon and Bernard Shaw strove hard to become poets. Both failed egregiously. 'Few poets become men.' History shows this to be directly contrary to fact. To go back for examples of soldier-poets to the days of Alfred the Great would savour of pedantry; but can we omit the name of a world-poet? Geoffrey Chaucer fought in the French Wars on three separate occasions. And what of the Elizabethans? Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney, and Rare Ben

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Jonson were not only soldiers, but men who added lustre to the profession of arms. To press forward: Lord Byron died a soldier's death in Greece; while the names of those young poets who gave their lives fighting in two world wars for their country's survival would fill a catalogue. Let the honoured name of Rupert Brooke stand symbolically for all. Were we poets to practise the *esprit de corps* which characterizes such professions as, say, medicine or the bar, our status in England to-day would be higher than it is KENNETH HARE

EDITORIAL NOTE. – In both of the above letters there appears to be a misunderstanding. Kenneth Hare does not exactly state that to be a man one must be a soldier, but he implies that the poets he has named were men by virtue of being soldiers . . . F. W. Burton overlooks the generally accepted rule that the views and opinions expressed in a signed contribution are not to be regarded as held by anyone but the author.

THE EAR TELLS US

Surely the varying usage of Shakespeare and Shelley proves beyond question, that 'fire' can be spoken either as a monosyllable or dissyllable, the more so as the quotations from Tennyson show that he used it as both. None of us would care to set up our authority against these poets. But does not the ear tell us that the second syllable is that nondescript vowel for which the phonetic sign is 'a'. This can be pronounced either as a very light unstressed syllable, or can be so light as to make it, for metrical purposes, one with the preceding syllable. Indeed the whole controversy seems to be cancelled out by any sensitive ear.

MARGARET GREEN

•

PORTMAN SQUARE—REMEMBRANCES

It is always with a sense of something coming to an end that a season of Readings and Talks at 33 Portman Square is completed, and one can almost hear the regretful signs in the silence. Mid-July had been fixed for the final evening of this past summer, which began on the last Friday in April, but the fixture was one of our Audience Nights, and as always it was so irresistible that there was no room for melancholy. Nevertheless melancholy had been in the air a week or two earlier, because 'A Poetry Quiz' had been conducted by our colleague, The Rev. Pratt Green and his friends, reinforced by Robert Armstrong, and this was an occasion of partings. Mr. Green was about to take up his new ministerial post in York, and at the close of a delightfully stimulating hour which we intend to copy (with his approval) he and Mrs. Green adjourned with us for a farewell party. We shall miss his cheerful presence and lively wisdom, as well as his fine artistic sense. Pratt Green has been good for Poetry.

Going back a little we remember with pleasure a most interesting talk arranged by Pamela Barnard on 'Music and Poetry', with Edward Hazelton in the Chair. The work and chequered career of Thomas Hood ('Laugh, Clown, Laugh!') were the subject of Stephen Graham's thoughtful and authoritative hour. 'I remember, I remember' was the very fitting title. Shulamite Roukin helped him, and a well-known and gifted stage personality, Natalie Moya, Mary Giles and John Glen shared the next reading, which was on American poetry past and present. 'Birds and Flowers' arranged by Rosamund Greenwood, another of our distinguished actress-members, assisted by Joan Hart, brought spring and summer into the room on that last Friday in May.

An old favourite and expert verse-elocutionist with few equals, Irene Brent, collaborated with Elizabeth Brough in an illustrated talk on the sonnet, and then, in mid-June, came one of those ever-welcome programmes in which 'Our Own Poets' or some of them take the limelight. The poems of Carla Lanyon-Lanyon, Celia Randall,

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7.	Joyce Grenfell	A morning William Morris might have known
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9.	William Kean Seymour	Store of Trees
10.	William Kean Seymour	So Sceptical my Heart
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12.	Arthur Vivian	Hope, Death and Immortality
13.	Terence Heywood	Winter Jasmine
14.	Geoffrey Johnson	Mystery
15.	Doris Major	Spring Carol

The Gen. Sec., The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

Kathleen V. Richardson, and Fredoon Kabraji were read with the skill always associated with our readings. A memorial hour was devoted to Lord Vansittart, Pearl Adam, and Albert Ralph Korn, in the care of Robert Armstrong, and following Pratt Green's excellent 'questionnaire' came one of the most important evenings of the season, a brilliant talk by that heroine of present-day poetry publishing, Erica Marx. At the end of it many in the audience asked us to ask her again.

AUTUMN EVENINGS ARE HERE AGAIN

'The Battle for Beauty is Never Finally Won.'

The weekly series of Talks and Readings for our September-December seasons is announced below, and everybody will be welcome at 33 Portman Square on Fridays, 6.30 to 7.30. Members 1s., Non-Members 2s. Reserved seats 2s. 6d.

September	13	Roy Campbell – The Man and his Poetry. TONY VAN DEN BERGH and ROBERT LYLE.
,,	20	MOIRA LISTER, reading Poems and Stories. Chairman: THE PRESIDENT.
,,	27	The Poet and the Painter – arranged by CHARLES DORAN with readers.
October	4	The Kalevala and the Poetry of Finland – Arranged by ROBERT ARMSTRONG in conjunction with the Anglo-Finnish Society.
,,	11	Mixed Grill – English Poetry 1580–1830. By SIR EUGEN MILLINGTON-DRAKE, K.C.M.G.
,,	18	ESME BERINGER on the story of Edmund Kean.
,,	25	Voices of Youth – arranged by EVELYN D. BANGAY. Chairman: JOHN GRADDON.
November	1	KENNEDY WILLIAMSON. 'Clothes in Poetry'. In the Chair: VIOLET ADAMSON.
,,	8	William Blake. An illustrated talk by KATHLEEN RAINE. Chairman: VIVIAN BURBURY.
,,	15	MARGARET RAWLINGS. Sheila Wingfield, her Poetry and her Personality.
,,	22	The Cream of the Poetry of *The Poetry Review*, with readers. Chairman: THOMAS MOULT.
,,	29	'Poetry in Prose and Verse' – WILTON COLE with MICHAEL HOWLEY.
December	6	H. S. MACKINTOSH reads His own Poems, with commentary on Rhyme, Rhythm and Form. In the Chair: MARY GILES.
,,	13	'Poetry for Declamation'. STEPHEN GRAHAM, with readers.

The next Gold Medal Examination will be held at 33 Portman Square on Tuesday, 26th November, 7 p.m.

TYPEWRITTEN BOOKLETS

AN IDEA FOR THE CENTRES

BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF

Whatever may strengthen the team-spirit of a Centre is not only to be welcomed, but it is well worth having as an example and encouragement to other Centres. The now familiar scheme of compiling an anthology, usually typewritten to save expense, has been copied with much effect up and down the country here at home, and now we are hearing of similar compilations by Centres overseas.

NATAL

The admirable publication sponsored by Miss Imogen Whyse and her group in Sydney, Australia, is a regular feature of international art and artistic doings, and this summer the Natal Centre has compiled its first 'Folio' of poems contributed by members and friends throughout the continent.

Mr. Thomas E. Lawrence is the Editor. To him and his co-workers we offer congratulations. He wrote in May that 'we have all been very busy and it has been difficult to organize anything, but we are looking forward to much more activity now that the "Natal fever" has left us, the days being quite mild and wintry.' (Remember: their winter is our summer!) The booklet opens with a request for contributions. 'It would be appreciated if members would have them typed similarly and should they choose to compile the whole Folio – we would be more than pleased.'

CARLISLE

The author of 'Waverley' was married in Carlisle, and we welcome this link between Scotland and the world as a potential Centre. Miss Margaret Higginson, we hear, is

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doing some excellent pioneering, and she and her colleagues are certainly most active in what are reported as their 'maybe rather unofficial methods of getting going.'

Norman Nicholson, who lives not too far off, has promised to give a talk and in July Miss Margaret O'Donnell opened a lively debate on 'Modern Poetry'. An inevitable problem with this now-forming Centre is the financial one. But we have no doubt that such enthusiasm as Miss Higginson's will quickly solve it. Her address for enquiries is Ashleigh House, Botchenby, Carlisle.

NOVA SCOTIA

The Nova Scotia Centre has had a melancholy setback this year. The death of the 'beloved President', Mr. Gilbert Hart, occurred suddenly in January. As a consequence the Annual Meeting was delayed, Dr. A. E. Kerr being elected Hon. President eventually, and Mrs. Edward Roberts filled the gap created through the loss of Mr. Hart. An impressive list of officers was elected, and we at our London headquarters are now awaiting news of the Centre's latest activities. Mrs. A. G. Baird, the Recording Secretary, may be addressed at 23 Edward Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

NORTHERN IRELAND

The autumn season has just begun at this remarkably successful Centre in Belfast, a poetry recital arranged by Mrs. H. V. Taggart having followed the enthusiastic Annual General Meeting in September. The programme of monthly gatherings until next March has been completed and a musical recital takes place on 15th October, entitled 'Ulster Voices in Song and Verse', to music composed by Dorothy Parke, the poems being contributed by Olive Hasluck. The reading of Norman Nicholson's verse play, 'The Old Man of the Mountains' has been arranged for November by Miss Helen Shaw. On 10th December a recital of music and poetry for which W. R. A. Anderson and J. Nelson Browne are responsible has for its title 'A Holly Wreath'. Miss Hettie Haddock welcomes enquiries at 18 Ashley Gardens, Belfast.

BURGESS HILL

If you live in Sussex you ought to book the second Saturday afternoon in each month this autumn and winter and visit the Congregational Church Hall, Junction Road, Burgess Hill. There you will be made to feel at home immediately you step over the threshold, so homely and friendly are the members of the Centre, who gather for a most attractive series of lectures and readings.

This season they began in September, and on 12th October there is to be a Reading by members, of scenes from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. A talk on Gerard Manley Hopkins follows on 9th November, and another on 'Modern Poetry' in January. Everybody will be excited when February comes, because the 8th is the day on which a Poetry Reading Competition is to be held. In March, a speaker will visit the Centre from headquarters. Incidentally the poems entered for the Competition must not exceed thirty lines. Miss Kathleen Boycott welcomes all enquiries at her home, 73 Janes Lane, Burgess Hill, and Mr. E. A. W. Madge is the President.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

There is no pause in the activities of this Centre, to which we paid tribute in our last number. In July, a reading from Cecil Day Lewis's latest book *Pegasus* was given by Mrs. Hester Flegg, the Hon. Mrs. Sylvia George, Mrs. Phyllis Williamson, and Mr. John Gittens. The writings of Campion and Thomas Love Peacock also occupied the afternoon. Another reading followed in August – from *Julius Caesar*, a popular play just now. Mr. and Mrs. Best, Miss Glen, Mrs. Gittens and Mr. Church supplemented the July group of readers. The President of the Branch is Wilfrid Gibson. Mrs. Gittens may be addressed by enquiries at 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge.

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